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BRITISH CONSERVATISM AND THE CONCEPT  
OF THE NATION.

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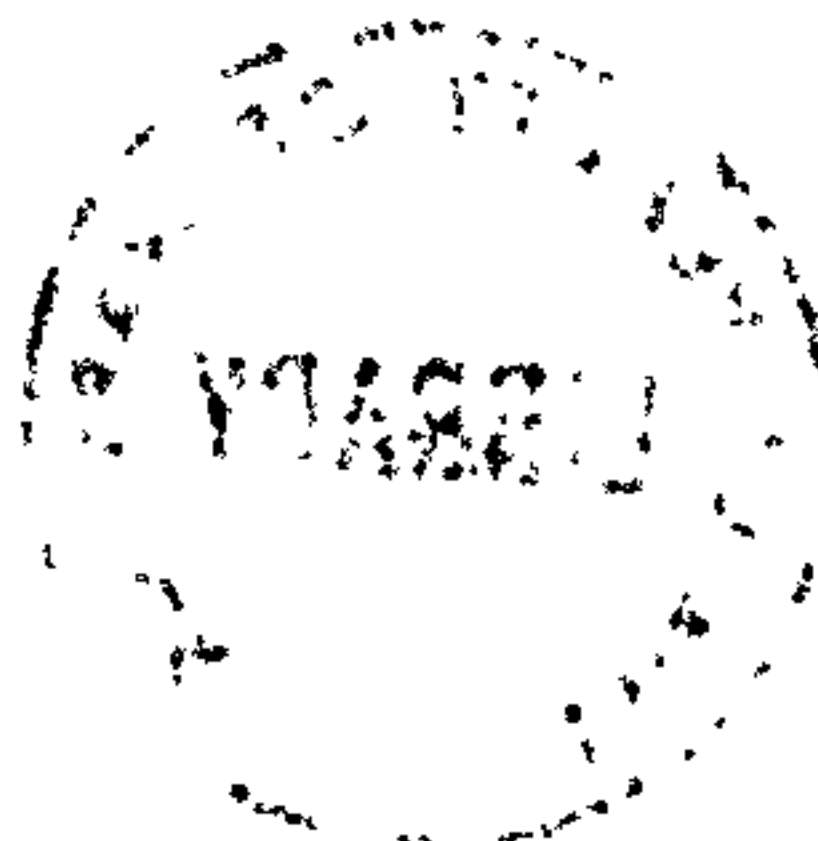
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## ABSTRACT.

This thesis examines the concept of the nation found in British conservative thought (the "conservative nation"), and its relevance to the policies and doctrine of the Conservative Party, especially in the Thatcher years. I argue that as a political doctrine, nationalism is essentially nebulous, gaining distinctive character from the discourse with which it is jointly-articulated and from its environment. Thus the British conservative nation is a distinct form of nationalist doctrine, built on core conservative values and on specific socio-historical factors. Its key themes are: (i) tradition; (ii) organicism; (iii) community; (iv) hierarchy; (v) anti-rationalism. The conservative nation has also been bolstered by the use of historical myths and symbols eg imperialism, Unionism and the monarchy.

The ideal-type conservative nation fuses ethnic (cultural) and civic (political) accounts of the nation, but contains significant sub-categories based on a separation of the political and cultural models. Chapter Two traces key moments in the development of the conservative nation, notably Burke's conservative state patriotism and the late 19th century emergence of the Conservative Party's "national strategy", based on a coherent idea of the nation and populist nationalism. Chapter Three looks at the breakdown of the concept into its political and cultural components by New Right theorists. It focuses on Hayek and Oakeshott as proponents of the political account, plus Scruton and Casey as adherents to a cultural account. Chapter Four examines Powell's redefinition of the nation and the ultimate failure of his attempt to construct a nationalist strategy to cover policy on immigration, the European Community and the Union.

The second half of the thesis looks at Thatcherism's revival of the language of nationhood, but argues that doctrinal tensions and the need for pragmatic issue management worked against the development of a coherent concept of the nation or a consistent national strategy. Chapter Five examines Thatcherism as (a) Mrs Thatcher's personal values; (b) a political doctrine, noting the tensions between its free market and strong state branches; and (c) as statecraft or issue management. The Falklands War and policies on the territorial Union provide examples of the relative successes and failures in Thatcherism's "politics of nationhood". Subsequent chapters use detailed case studies on the European Community and the politics of race to illustrate Thatcherism's use of nationalist rhetoric, and its failure to construct a coherent national strategy across these policy areas. Chapter Six assesses British policy on the EC, the integration process and ideas of sovereignty. Chapter Seven outlines the main themes of the debate between Euro-sceptics and Euro-enthusiasts in the Conservative Party. In Chapter Eight I examine the problems which the management of an ethnically plural society has posed for Thatcherism and the conservative nation in general, assessing policies on immigration and integration.

The thesis concludes by contrasting the shortcomings of the Thatcherite account of the nation with the positive themes of identity and community inherent in the conservative nation.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.

BNA.	British Nationality Act,1981.
CAP.	Common Agricultural Policy.
CRE.	Commission for Racial Equality.
EC.	European Community.
ECB.	European Central Bank.
Ecu	European Currency Unit.
EFTA.	European Free Trade Association.
EMS.	European Monetary System.
EMU.	Economic and Monetary Union.
EP.	European Parliament.
ERM.	Exchange Rate Mechanism.
GATT.	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
IGC.	Inter-Governmental Conference.
NATO.	North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
NTBG.	'No Turning Back' Group.
SEA.	Single European Act,1986.
VAT.	Value Added Tax.
WEU.	Western European Union.



## INTRODUCTION.

In this thesis I present an analysis of the concept of the nation found in British conservative thought and in the policies and rhetoric of the Conservative Party. The study draws upon the literature and methodology used in studies of nationalism, conservative thought and Thatcherism. It is my contention that the conservative concept of the nation (referred to henceforth as the "conservative nation") is a distinctive brand of nationalist doctrine, built on core conservative values and on specific socio-historical factors. The first half of the thesis examines the development of the conservative nation, noting its central themes, the work of conservative theorists from Burke to Scruton and the importance of the Conservative Party in creating a populist conservative nationalism. The second half looks at the conservative nation in the Thatcher era, with specific reference to Thatcherite discourse and policies on the Union, the European Community (EC) and race relations. I argue that after the failures of both "one nation" and Powellite national strategies, Thatcherism did not bring a coherent approach to the "politics of nationhood". It lacked a clear concept of the nation and a national strategy in which an idea of the nation could be applied to the key policy fields found in the "politics of nationhood".

"Nationalism" can refer to a number of things: a sense of communal identity, a social movement or a political doctrine. The character of nationalist politics is influenced by both doctrinal and environmental factors. Therefore, although the primary focus of this study is on nationalism

as a political doctrine, and on the conservative nation as a variant of this, I also look at historical and sociological explanations for the initial success and recent decline of conservative nationalism in Britain. As a political doctrine, nationalism is notably malleable and flexible; it has no single necessary ideological expression but instead can co-exist with a wide variety of political doctrines and appear in a number of guises. On the Right, integral nationalism is found in fascist ideology while moderate conservatism offers a relatively depoliticized style of nationalist thought. Nationalist politics have also been coupled with both liberal and socialist doctrine, and with imperialist and anti-colonial movements. In each of these cases the basic nationalist belief in the importance of the national group is given a distinctive character by the doctrine and environmental circumstances with which it is associated. Nationalism is chameleon-like, its political colouring depending on the values with which it is jointly articulated.

"It is capable of being inflected to very different political positions, at different historical moments, and its character depends very much on the traditions, discourses and forces with which it is articulated" (Hall, 1992, p.6).

The nebulous nature of nationalism has meant that scholars have been unable to agree on a universal definition of the nation producing subjective and objective, ethnic and civic accounts of the nation as a social unit. The optimum definition of the nation should take account of these different elements, recognizing the importance of both objective factors (eg language and territory) and subjective factors (eg a sense of national identity and shared history). It should also note the dual ethnic and civic components



of the nation,namely its roots in a distinctive ethnic community with its own culture,plus shared citizenship and civic culture.Thus,

"A modern nation may be defined as a territorially-based community of human beings sharing a distinct variant of modern culture,bound together by a strong sentiment of unity and solidarity,marked by a clear historically-rooted consciousness of national identity and possessing,or striving to possess,a genuine political self-government." (Symmons-Symonolewicz,1985,p.221).

The concept of the nation espoused by the political discourse with which nationalism is coupled provides the key to understanding nationalist doctrines.The large number of nationalist doctrines and movements found in the modern world illustrates the flexibility of nationalism as a political phenomenon. Aside from minimal common threads regarding the significance of the nation as a social unit and the desirability of strengthening and protecting it through self-determination within a state structure, nationalism is ideologically nebulous.Nationalist doctrines get their particular shape and characteristics from the political values with which they are associated and from their environment.A common typology of nationalist doctrine notes two main definitions of the nation,the ethnic and the civic (Smith,1991;Schwarzmantel,1991;Alter,1989).The ethnic or cultural account defines the nation in terms of common descent from a distinct ethnic group.Alter notes that:

"The spirit of community that obtains in a cultural nation is founded upon seemingly objective criteria such as common heritage and language, a distinct area of settlement,religion,culture and history,and does not need to be mediated by a national state or other political form. Consciousness of unity,the sense of belonging together,develops independent of the state." (Alter,1989,p.15).



Plamenatz and Kohl contend that the ethnic definition of the nation has been predominant in Central and Eastern Europe where it has given rise to exclusivist nationalisms (Plamenatz,1972;Kohl,1967).Fichte was one of the first writers to offer a coherent ethnic account of the nation,arguing that individuals owe their identity to the nation and culture into which they are born (Reiss,1955).His was an organic and deterministic nationalism defining the nation as an ethnically and culturally homogenous group, superior to the state and the individual.The nation is a natural social unit,linking man with his forefathers and has language as its key external feature.The maintenance of ethnic unity and the cultural superiority of the German Volk was Fichte's paramount objective.To achieve this he advocated national self-sufficiency and a closed nation-state.The ethnic definition of the nation is not though confined to Central Europe:one of its major expressions was the integral nationalism of Barres and Maurras in late nineteenth century France (Sutton,1982;Soucy,1972).Again the nation is a pre-political community,defined in ethnic and cultural terms.The individual owes his identity to the nation,and the nation is to be purged of alien elements.The ethnic nation then tends to produce exclusivist,anti-pluralist and anti-democratic nationalisms which propagate myths of dead heroes and a golden age of authoritarian rule.Its politics are aggressive and often racist.

The alternative civic or political model of the nation is frequently cited as the predominant one in Western Europe,stressing equal citizenship in a legal-political community (Smith,1991).The emphasis here is on individual and national self-determination.The civic model is a state-based account in which membership of the nation depends on citizenship rather

than ethnic origins: citizenship and nationality are coterminous. Patriotism or allegiance to the nation-state is a by-product of political citizenship and active participation in a shared civic culture. Whereas the ethnic model produces exclusivist nationalisms, the civic model advocates a pluralist nationalism in which ethnic diversity is welcomed and democratic government is the norm. This style of "citizenship nationalism" was evident in the French Revolution when Abbe Sieyes defined the nation as an association of free and equal citizens exercising popular sovereignty (Schwarzmantel, 1991). The liberal nationalisms of Mill and Mazzini linked individual autonomy with national determination, while Renan provided the classic account of the political nation as based on a shared (democratic) history and on active consent of the people. For Renan, the nation is a "daily plebiscite" resting on democratic values and active participation (Renan, 1990, p. 19).

There is a tendency though to portray the differences between ethnic and civic accounts of the nation as an inevitable dichotomy or unbridgeable divide. The re-emergence of ethnically exclusivist nationalisms in Eastern Europe and the evils of fascistic expressions of the cultural nation have led some modern socialists to seek a political model of the nation free from ethnic undertones (Samuel, 1989).<sup>2</sup> It is my contention that the division between the ethnic and civic accounts of the nation is not clear-cut or inevitable. To some extent the civic-ethnic divide is an artificial one. Renan recognized the importance of shared historical experiences and feelings of communal belonging and identity, but these tend to be at their strongest in nations based on a dominant ethnic group. As Renan argued, the nation has both "soul and body": it is a "spiritual principle" based on communal



(primarily ethnic) memories as well as political institutions and culture (Renan,1990,pp.18-19). Smith too recognizes the dual civic-ethnic nature of many nationalisms, noting that "a national identity is fundamentally multi-dimensional;it can never be reduced to a single element" (Smith,1991,p.14). The continued strength of the national idea rests on its dual civic-ethnic character:the quest for self-identity leads man to seek communal relations with his fellows in the framework of the national community where such ties are strongest.The national community is the location of ethnic memories which link man to the past,to the future and to the land on which he lives.But equally the national community is the locus of political and social relations,of citizenship and shared modes of behaviour.

The concept of the nation found in moderate British conservatism is a prime example of an account which transcends the civic-ethnic divide. It is a Western civic concept in its stress on limited government and civic culture,but one which recognizes that attachment to the national community is enhanced by shared traditions,values and culture.Its focus then is neither exclusively political nor cultural,but fuses the two by depicting British political culture as a reflection of a national character which values tradition,community and constitutionalism.The conservative nation does not define the nation in primarily ethnic terms,though many of the traditional values and shared experiences on which it focuses are those of an English elite.Instead national identity has been defined to meet the needs of a multi-ethnic state:an Anglo-British Unionist culture is part of a populist conservative nationalism which aims for ethnic and social integration.<sup>3</sup> Equally though the democratic aspirations of the political nation are curtailed.The conservative nation falls within the Western

tradition of state-based national identity but links state and society through a national community whose values help shape state institutions.

The conservative nation is a hybrid of the more moderate elements of the cultural and political accounts of the nation. It is a concept in which the political and pre-political components of identity and community are recognized. The nation is shaped by both cultural and political factors; national identity is founded on state patriotism (allegiance to national institutions) and shared culture and experiences (whether ethnic or state-created). The conservative nation is also a special case because of its opposition to ideological expressions of nationalism. As a political doctrine, conservatism shuns ideological or end-state goals in favour of philosophical scepticism and a preference for "limited politics" (O'Sullivan, 1976). Thus Burke presents a conservative account of nationhood rather than an ideologically nationalist one (Burke, 1986). Conservatism also seeks a middle way between the atomistic individualism of liberal methodology and the determinism of organic or integral nationalisms. The individual is a social animal whose identity is best expressed through his membership of various "little platoons" from family to nation, but his freedom is also valued. The nation should not become part of an ideological politics in which ethnic exclusivism or popular sovereignty work against the conservative's philosophical scepticism.

The amalgamation of the political and cultural elements of national community is not a rigid one. Internal tensions between the two, which reflect those between the traditionalist and individualist wings of conservative thought, mean that the conservative nation is subdivided into political and



cultural accounts of the nation. The political account, found among liberal-conservatives of the New Right, adopts an individualist outlook focusing on the market and on limited government. Cultural conservatives espouse a cultural account which emphasizes national culture and community (see Chapter Three). The civic-ethnic mix in the conservative nation means that although membership of the national community is not defined along purely ethnic lines, groups not sharing the values and traditions of the majority British community are not easily integrated. This has created problems for conservatives in coming to terms with a plural society which has a number of strong communal identities.

Nationalism is not just a political doctrine and is not shaped solely by the discourse with which it is articulated. As well as looking at the conservative concept of the nation, this thesis also examines conservative nationalism as an official state nationalism and looks at the role of the Conservative Party in transforming the conservative account of the nation into a populist nationalism. The success of the conservative nation is based on doctrinal and socio-historical factors. English national identity emerged among the (relatively homogeneous) ruling elite well before the age of mass, ideological nationalism. The process of nation-building also began in this early-modern period, but neither the state nor conservative forces began to play an active role in encouraging state patriotism until the Napoleonic Wars, by which time radical accounts of the nation were prominent (Colley, 1986). The early crystallization of national identity and the nation-state would both ease the way for conservative nationalism to become the official state nationalism, but conservative forces did not develop their own concept of the nation until Burke's ideas were widely disseminated. Hroch notes that

nationalist movements begin with scholarly interest in the nation among intellectuals who seek to define a concept of nationhood which is then popularized by a nationalist movement (Hroch,1985).In England,artists and intellectuals had been promoting national identity for much of the eighteenth century,while radical accounts of a nation of "free-born Englishmen" had existed since the Civil War (Newman,1987; Kohn,1940).

Burke's account of the conservative nation was not the starting point for English nationalism or national identity,but he did play a central role in developing an account of the nation acceptable to the conservative governing classes.This marked the beginning of a gradual appropriation of the language of nationhood by conservative forces which was not completed until Disraeli's Conservative Party transformed Burkean state patriotism into an official conservative nationalism (Cunningham,1989;Schwarz,1986).<sup>4</sup> The conservative account of the nation is a special case because its status as an official state-based nationalism in a long-established state.As with other nationalisms the key roles played by intellectuals (Burke and the English Romantics) and a social or political movement (the Conservative Party) are present.The use of myths and "invented traditions" is also common to nationalist politics:in the British case this included myths of empire and monarchy.As an official state nationalism,conservatism helped foster an integrative Unionist identity,encouraging loyalty to the state among the component nations of the UK.

The literature and methodology employed in this thesis are drawn from studies of nationalism,especially studies of nationalist doctrines and national identity in Britain.But this thesis differs from and adds to the



existing literature by focusing on the unusual case of British conservatism, and analysing its successes and shortcomings in terms of political doctrine and socio-historical factors. Of special interest for the study of nationalism are conservatism's appropriation of the language of nationhood and the way in which the Conservative Party helped to foster a populist state-based nationalism. British national identity has received more attention in recent years, but many studies have either neglected the conservative nation or have exaggerated its coherence. Nairn has argued that Britain lacks an official, well-developed nationalist doctrine, instead having a "surrogate" nationalism based on the monarchy (Nairn, 1988, a). He believes that the monarchy provides an integrative focal point for loyalty and a sense of community, without having the populist trappings associated with both democratic and ethnic nationalisms. The monarchy shores up the conservative forces of the pre-modern state, disguising the need for modernization which nationalisms recognize. Nairn is correct in identifying the monarchy as an important part of the conservative state, but the place of the monarchy only partly explains the endurance of a non-ethnic and traditionalist account of the nation. Of more importance is the persistence of the conservative nation and of conservative state-nationalism of which the monarchy has long been a significant (but not central) part.

The second half of this thesis examines the concept of the nation and "politics of nationhood" associated with Thatcherism, focusing in particular on the nature of Thatcherism itself, and the policies of the Thatcher governments on the territorial Union, towards the EC, and on race relations. Some accounts have claimed that Thatcherism's revival of the language of nationhood (nationalist rhetoric, talk of the "enemy within" and "alien"

elements) is part of a coherent Thatcherite nationalism (Hall,1988; Gordon & King,1986;O'Shea,1984).However,I aim to show that this tendency to portray the conservative nation as having a natural or inevitable place as the dominant account of nationhood is flawed.The declining efficacy of the nation-state and of the two main national strategies of the Conservative Party since the 1960s has weakened the conservative nation.The "one nation" and Powellite strategies failed to adequately answer the questions about national identity and the nation-state raised by British membership of the European Community,the emergence of a plural society or sub-state threats to the Union.The political and cultural accounts of the nation found in the New Right further weakened the theoretical basis of the conservative nation.Voices on the Left have depicted Thatcherism as a reassertion of conservative nationalism (eg in the Falklands War or in its policies on immigration),but I argue that Thatcherism did not manage (and probably did not intend) to produce a redefined or coherent account of the nation or politics of nationhood. Doctrinal tensions and problems of statecraft (eg on EC and race issues) prevented this.However,although it was conceptually ill-defined,the Thatcherite nation did move towards a new,uneasy pairing of the New Right's political and cultural accounts of the nation in which membership of the national community came to be defined along ideological and ethnic lines.Thus Thatcherite discourse simultaneously exhibited an individualist and internationalist economic outlook plus an authoritarian stress on culture and tradition.

The study of Thatcherism found in this thesis thus reveals the complex place of ideas of the nation in modern conservative thought and in the political strategy of the Conservative Party.My analysis casts light on the



nature of Thatcherism by examining the merits and demerits of viewing it as (i) Mrs Thatcher's personal values; (ii) as a political doctrine based on an uneasy relationship between free market and strong state values; and (iii) as statecraft, a government strategy based on pragmatic issue management. The nation/nationalism issue then becomes an important means of judging the character of Thatcherite rhetoric and policies; the relationship between Thatcherism and other conservative thought; plus the benefits and problems awaiting modern conservatives seeking to redefine the concept of the nation or construct a national strategy.

This study of the conservative nation also offers important insights into the nature of conservatism as well as the relationship between conservative thought and the policies of the Conservative Party. I maintain that conservatism is best seen as a collection of values and insights which taken together produce a distinct style of political thought. There is no single rationale of conservatism which can capture the essence of conservative thought in its different historical guises: values of tradition and scepticism are not unique to conservatism. Honderich's claim that the essence of conservatism is selfishness and lack of moral principle is an unsatisfactory conclusion (Honderich, 1990, p. 239). Equally contentious is his list of nineteen features of conservative thought whose length and breadth - it draws on too wide an array of political thought, including Nozick - do not help in the search for conservatism's core propositions (Honderich, 1990, p. 210). Philosophical scepticism is an important feature of conservative thought, much of which is shaped in opposition to rationalist politics (Allison, 1984). O'Sullivan's claim that conservatism is distinctive because of its preference for "limited politics" and civil rather than social freedoms

conveys the essence of Oakeshott's liberal-conservatism, but this is not the only valid manifestation of conservative thought (O'Sullivan, 1976 & 1989, a). Conservatism should not be reduced to either a situational or class-based ideology (Huntington, 1957; Eccleshall, 1977). Mannheim notes the differences between pre-ideological traditionalism and modern conservatism when he notes that:

"Conservatism..refers to a continuity, historically and sociologically comprehensible, which has arisen in a specific sociological and historical situation and which develops in direct conjunction with living history" (Mannheim, 1986, p.77).

Huntington's situational definition of conservatism depicts it as a positional ideology, "employed to justify any established social order, no matter where or when it exists, against any fundamental challenge" (Huntington, 1957). But this account neglects the configuration of ideas and values which lies at the heart of conservatism (Allen, 1981). Themes of tradition, organicism, a hierarchical community plus philosophical scepticism are interlocking values, recognizably conservative only when taken together as a statement of values. Even then it is important to recognize that conservatism is not static or uniform: its values are dynamic, shifting according to historical circumstances. Doctrinally too, conservatism is not rigid but has two main branches, the traditional-authoritarian and the individualist (Greenleaf, 1983; Norton & Aughey, 1981). In this thesis, I regard conservatism as a configuration of core values and propositions, but one shaped by reactions to historical circumstances, philosophical scepticism and opposition to rationalist politics, as well as by its belief in the value of tradition, organic change and communal relations. Conservatism is not a rigid or static body of thought, but one capable of responding to changing



circumstances and containing significant sub-groupings. The strength of the conservative concept of the nation is in part explained by the similarities between some nationalist and conservative values eg the emphasis on a traditional, historic national community, and on the value of patriotism as a bond between individual, state and society.

The theoretical clarity of conservatism is further confused by its uneasy relationship with the Conservative Party. Bound as it is by considerations of statecraft and the need for pragmatism, the Conservative Party cannot be an automatic vehicle for the realization of conservative programmes (Bulpitt, 1986, a & 1991). The second part of the thesis refutes the conclusions of Hall and proponents of the "New Right, New Racism" account - which claim that Thatcherism is an ideologically-coherent hegemonic project - by outlining the problems of translating a commitment to nationhood into a consistent, practical policy framework (Hall, 1988; Gordon & King, 1986). Powellism illustrated the political unsuitability of a nationalist strategy for a party concerned with issue management. The gap between the Burkean conservative nation and the populist nationalism of the Conservative Party was apparent in the racialist and imperialist rhetoric of the late nineteenth century. The case study covers the Thatcher governments and the Major government up to the 1992 general election.

This thesis then draws on the literature and methods used in both political theory (studies of nationalism and conservative thought) and British politics (the Conservative Party, Thatcherism, race politics and Britain's relations with the EC) to provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the conservative nation and conservative state

nationalism. It thus adds to the revival of academic interest in nationalism, British national identity and developments in conservative politics but often differs in its outlook and conclusions.

Footnotes:

1. A note on terminology. The "conservative nation" refers to that configuration of values and propositions which together make up the conservative account of the nation. "Nationhood" refers to those subjective and objective factors which give rise to the sense of being a national community. A "politics of nationhood" is one concerned with the protection and development of these bases of national identity, with a "national strategy" translating these concerns into an active political project, which in contemporary life would cover areas such as race, the EC and territorial Union. My use of the term "conservative nation" to mean the concept of the nation found in conservative thought should be clearly distinguished from Andrew Gamble's use of the term "Conservative Nation" to mean the electoral perspectives ("politics of support") and governing strategies ("politics of power") put together by the Conservative Party (Gamble, 1974).
2. Tom Nairn claims that "the theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure (Nairn, 1977, p. 329), but recent Left scholarship has sought to redress the balance by reviving socialist accounts of the nation. The collected History Workshop in Samuel's collection illustrate a renewed interest in radical patriotisms in British history (Samuel, 1989). Schwarzmantel argues for a pluralist, citizenship nationalism based on ethnic diversity, popular sovereignty and multiple loyalties (Schwarzmantel, 1991).
3. Problems of terminology exist because of the United Kingdom's status as a multi-ethnic state. The UK may be better defined as a state-nation rather than a nation-state because its Unionist identity emerged long after that of the ethnic-based national identities. I argue that the conservative nation draws on the values and experiences of an English elite, but is concerned with promoting an Anglo-British state-based form of national identity. Welsh and Scottish identity exist alongside British identity, but English identity has lost much of its distinctiveness. Irish and British identities are the major source of contention in the UK.
4. The conservative nation is a state-based patriotism, adding attachments to the state and its institutions to attachments to the landscape, people and culture of one's country. Themes of allegiance and affection towards the "parliamentary nation" and the monarchy are common in this "conservative state patriotism". The official state nationalism of Disraelian conservatism suggests a politicization of these basic loyalties in the face of external or internal threats to the nation.



## CHAPTER ONE:THE CONSERVATIVE CONCEPT OF THE NATION.

As a political doctrine,nationalism is largely nebulous,its ideological shape and tone being influenced by the political ideas with which it is jointly articulated.The conservative nation is that expression of nationalist doctrine which emerged in Britain when conservative theory began its appropriation of the language of nationhood.Its roots date back to Burke and it has found significant expression in the discourse of Disraeli, Baldwin,Powell and various New Right thinkers,all of whom will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.This chapter focuses on the theoretical core of the conservative nation,that configuration of values which has shaped a distinctive conservative account of the national community and national identity.

The conservative concept of the nation is not a rigid one,changing over time to reflect political circumstances,but it tends to draw on the same common fund of doctrinal themes,reinforcing them with the use of myths.In this section I will examine those values which taken together produce the "conservative nation" and have enabled it to enjoy a dominant position in British accounts of nationhood.These key themes in the theretical make-up of the conservative nation are: (i) tradition; (ii) organicism; (iii) community; (iv) hierarchy and (v) anti-rationalism.I will also discuss the most important myths to have bolstered the conservative account of the nation.

### (1) Tradition.

A belief in the importance of traditional procedures as a guide to contemporary problems, and a reverence for the past are central themes in conservative thought. For conservatives, continued usage over time is a better indicator of the worth of an institution than abstract principle. Burke stressed the "prescriptive authority" of long-lived institutions and the continued relevance of the wisdom of past generations. Modes of behaviour are passed from generation to generation, with practices becoming part of an immemorial tradition which has prescriptive authority because of its continuity and transmission over time. Disraeli echoed Burke's belief in tradition and prescription as the basis of political knowledge:

"This respect for Precedent, this clinging to Prescription, this reverence for Antiquity, which are so often ridiculed by conceited and superficial minds, and move the essential contempt of the gentlemen who admire abstract principles, appear to me to have their origin in a profound knowledge of human nature, and in a fine observation of public affairs, and satisfactorily to account for the permanent character of our liberties. Those great men, who have periodically risen to guide the helm of government in times of tumultuous and stormy exigency, knew that a state is a creation of refined art. They knew that if once they admitted the abstract rights of subjects, they must inevitably advance to the abstract rights of men, and then that the very foundations of the civil polity would sink beneath them." (Disraeli, 1835, p.45).

For Disraeli, shared tradition is at the heart of national character and identity. It is through tradition that individuals become aware of themselves as belonging to a historic community in which values and behaviour shared across time give society a sense of continuity and meaning (Pocock, 1968). Familiarity comes through shared patterns of behaviour so that social intercourse occurs within a framework of tacit and collective understanding. Hayek argues that traditions emerge spontaneously through a process of

cultural evolution which reveals the optimum rules of the free society (Hayek,1982).Scruton claims that tradition has two main functions:turning "history into reason" so that it guides man's actions,and locating man in a transcendent society (Scruton, 1984,pp.40-42). Traditions develop in a national context, shaping man's perception of his role in,and the nature of, the national community.

This focus on tradition as a repository of wisdom and experience produces a sceptical attitude to change,but it is misleading to associate conservatism with opposition to all change or with reactionary nostalgia. Conservatives do not oppose all change, but argue that it should be evolutionary rather than revolutionary (Honderich,1990,pp.1-16). Cultural or institutional change can only be successful when it works with the grain of tradition and maintains continuity.Conservatives value stability and order, defending the interests of the established forces in society against change based on abstract principle or end-state goals.Aughey argues that conservatism is the "political recreation of the meaning of tradition", putting its interpretation of the past to work in the battle of ideas (Aughey et al,1992,p.13).

"Conservatism believes itself to be in touch with the varied life of the state;indeed that it is life's 'true' political character..In this sense conservatism may be understood as the inner vision of the life of the state.It looks within the traditions,customs and conventions of a political community for its imagery and inspiration,and attempts to give these practices an authoritative statement." (Aughey et al,1992, p.14).

Mannheim recognises the centrality of traditionalism to conservative thought,but argues that a respect for tradition by itself is not enough to



distinguish the conservative from his doctrinal opponents (Mannheim,1986). For Mannheim,traditionalism is a psychic attribute present in all humans, while a traditionalist approach to politics is merely reactive.Conservatism in contrast is a historically and sociologically specific occurrence,emerging in dynamic,class-differentiated societies.In conservatism, traditionalism is given meaning in relation to a specific set of circumstances.The values of the past and lessons of history are taken as ways of seeing the world: "the conservative mode of experience thus preserves itself..by raising to the level of reflection and methodological control those attitudes to the world which would otherwise have been lost to authentic experience" (Mannheim, 1986, p.101).The conservative judges the modern world not in terms of a *priori* values but through a framework in which history and past experience enables the worth of actions to be evaluated.

There is no single value which alone can be taken as the rationale of conservatism:the stress on tradition is only intelligible as part of a wider set of values which include organicism and an hierarchical account of community.Tradition and a concern with national history are central to any nationalist doctrine: nationalism is necessarily Janus-faced, looking backwards to justify the nation's claims to be a unique community.' But reverence for the past and the focus on a shared history as a source of national identity are particularly important elements in the conservative nation for they are core conservative values.The conservative nation also relies upon myths or "invented traditions".Its account of British history is a politicized one,stressing continuity and using myths to bolster conservative values.The Conservative Party has benefitted electorally from

its attachment to tradition,gaining from and helping to foster deference among the electorate (Jessop,1974).

#### (ii) Organicism.

Conservatives portray the nation-state as an organic unit,evolving gradually over many years and reflecting the character of the British people.National institutions are shaped by the inherited wisdom of previous generations, their essential features surviving the test of time,changing only when the mood of the nation dictates it.The nation-state is not an artificial or rational creation,but a natural growth.Institutions are national in character because they are expressions of the essential character of the national group itself. Sir Geoffrey Butler regarded an organic interpretation of the development of society and its institutions as "the fundamental doctrine of Toryism" (Butler,1957,ch.1). Anthony Quinton ranks it second only to traditionalism,to which it is closely linked:

"The second principle is that of organicism,which takes society to be a unitary,natural growth, an organized living whole, not a mechanical aggregate.It is not composed of bare abstract individuals but of social beings..The institutions of society are thus not external,disposable devices,of interest to men only by reason of the individual purposes they serve; they are,rather,constitutive of the social identity of men." (Quinton,1978,p.16).

The monarchy, Parliament and constitutional doctrines of the rule of law are embodiments of conservative values (eg tradition,authority, national unity and continuity) and are reflections of the national character ("the English genius").Lord Hugh Cecil believed that "the Constitution is the greatest contribution that the English people have made to human progress,

and it bears deeply imprinted on it their peculiar characteristics" (Cecil, 1912,p.218).State institutions are expressions of the national essence which binds the national community across time.The principles of liberty,limited government and rule of law have traditional authority, expressing continuity and unity.Through these national institutions,state and society are linked in a national community.For Leo Amery,

"A human society is not a numerical aggregation of individuals inhabiting a certain area.It is an organic entity,with its own structure, its own history,its own tradition, its own character. The individuals who in constant succession compose and maintain it are in turn sustained by its economic life, moulded to its structure and permeated by its tradition." (L.Amery,1935,p.164)

Conservatives depict the process of state-building as one of gradual and continuous development in accordance with the character of the English people.The course of English history is presented as evolutionary,free from dramatic breaks with tradition, with change occurring only in order to strengthen links between institutions and national character,removing proven flaws.Burke,Disraeli and Winston Churchill all portray the Magna Carta and the Glorious Revolution as moments in the triumphal march of constitutionalism across the ages.This mythical tranquility is compared favourably with the disruptions to social order provoked by change based on abstract principle.Burke criticized the Jacobins for working against the grain of French history and character,while belief in the supremacy of English development underlines Disraeli's wry comment that "an English revolution is at least a solemn sacrifice,a French is an indecent massacre" (Disraeli,1835,p.65).



The organic nature of state and society mean that the optimum elements of the past are maintained. Traditional authority and social relations survive, with tradition and the passage of time proving better guides to the values of institutions than abstract principles. Order and authority are strengthened by their links with tradition and inherited wisdom. The existing state of affairs is, for conservatives, the optimal one: its worth has been proved by its survival and evolution. Constitutional change must be sympathetic, working with the grain of national history and tradition: "you cannot play loose and fast with these ancient growths of civilization." (Balfour, quoted in Buck, 1975, p. 174).

The conservative idea of the organic development of the British state reflects, in part, its historical and sociological development. English nationhood developed early but gradually: an English nation existed long before the late eighteenth century when nationalism as a political doctrine first took shape. English institutions also had a long, though not strife free, development with traditions of constitutional rule entrenched before the modern age. Because of the relatively early and uncontested nature of English nation-building and state development, the conservative emphasis on continuity and organicism lends itself to the English case. But the conservative reading of history is neither uniform nor clear-cut: many conservative thinkers have espoused a Whig history, focusing on limited government and historical continuity.

A more potent problem for the conservative belief in the organic development of nation and state is that the United Kingdom does not have a single ethnic or national identity, but consists of a number of national

groupings with distinct identities and historical experiences. the story told by conservatives is that of the English, then Anglo-British, historical experience, reinforced by those Unionist myths which entered the vocabulary of the conservative nation in the late 19th century. The idea of the organic state stresses continuity and tradition, but as differences in historical experience exist between the component nations, the conservative nation has had to foster a new state-based account of British identity, though still from a largely English perspective.

### (iii) Community.

The conservative idea of the nation reflects conservatism's concern with community. The nation is the most important of a number of communities which shapes the individual's character and gives him identity. From Burke's "little platoons" onwards, the family, local community and nation have all been upheld by conservative thinkers. The liberal notion of the independent, asocial individual is rejected: individuals achieve identity and belonging through their communal ties, chief among them being their national identity. Man is a social organism whose identity springs from his membership of a traditional national community which links him to past and future generations and to his fellow man. As Chris Patten notes, the individual is "a social animal who can obtain his full stature only in groupings greater than himself, such as his country, his church or his family." (Patten, 1983, p.7). Communal membership is crucial for self-conception and identity, and also shapes one's character. Patriotism binds members of the nation together: a sense of nationhood is integrative, uniting people of different classes in common interest and experience. The nation is

more than a sum of its individual members: it is an organic entity in its own right, surviving across time.

Despite a revival of interest in the concept of community in political philosophy, its significance in contemporary conservative thought has declined, with New Right individualism moving into the ascendancy. In both political philosophy and studies of ethnicity, community is an important concept. Communitarian theorists depict man as a social animal with communal membership meeting man's need or desire for identity and social relations. Communitarian ideas are compatible with a number of doctrinal positions from anarchism to conservatism (Plant, 1978; Parry, 1982; Kymlicka, 1989). For conservatives, the idea of community relates to a hierarchical, organic society and gives the life of the individual content and meaning. David Clark's study claims that the two fundamental components of communal membership are "solidarity and significance", together providing social cohesion, a sense of belonging and security (Clark, 1973). For conservatives, membership of the nation brings social unity, common identity, patriotism and structure. Anderson argues that nationalism relies on a sense of "imagined community": no citizen can ever meet all the people who live in his country so feelings of unity must be based on "imagined" links of shared history and culture (Anderson, 1983). Burkean conservatism values the sense of community found in social units from the family to the nation and beyond, but recognizes the role of "representations" of communal solidarity. The conservative concept of community is also imagined because of its focus on links between past and future generations. Nisbet noted the centrality of the idea of community in early conservative thought, stressing the group-based



view of man and society found in Burkean and Hegelian conservatives (Nisbet,1962).

"The family,religious association and local community - these,the conservatives insisted,cannot be regarded as the external product's of man's thought and behaviour.They are essentially prior to the individual and are the indispensable supports of belief and conduct.Release man from the context of community and you get not freedom and rights but intolerable aloneness and subjection to demonic fears and passions." (Nisbet,1962,p.25)

The conservative concept of community is not indifferent to the liberty of the individual,but rejects an individualist methodology.The individual is in part shaped by his communal relations,but the conservative view avoids the deterministic extremes of the continental Right's organic theorists (eg Fichte,Barres) for whom the individual is subservient to,and shaped by,his national community.For the conservative,the individual is important in his own right,but influences society and furthers his own personality through membership of a plurality of communitites,especially his family and nation. Man is both shaped by and helps to shape his social environment.But it is the group which survives longest and is ultimately most significant, its best features having to be preserved by the current group members.The individual's actions,if they are wise,are determined by his membership of this historical community.Man is "the temporary possessor and life-renter" (Burke,1986,p.192) and if he does not find expression in a historical community he becomes "little better than the flies of a summer" (Burke,1986, p.193).Recently,Kymlicka has argued that liberals can accept cultural or communal membership as a primary goal,but rejects the conservative claim that groups can have a meaning and identity beyond the aggregate of their

members. Instead he argues that the value of community lies in its role as the arena in which individual choices are made (Kymlicka, 1989).

Casey believes that membership of the national community rescues the individual from the excesses of individualism, providing him with a sense of identity and purpose (Casey, 1978). Self-knowledge and identity are depicted as moral values by John Vincent and Norman St John Stevas, with nationality as the main cement binding people together (Vincent, 1991; St John Stevas, 1980). The opposite of communal membership is isolation, which produces alienation and anomie.

"Central to Conservative thinking is the idea of community which moderates the rigours of the clash between individual and state. Conservatives have faith in social spontaneity and organic growth. They see society as...the manifestation of a shared life in co-operation and reconciliation by those who hold certain ideas in common." (St John Stevas, 1980, p.9)

Conservatism attaches great value to the traditional authority of state institutions, but legitimate state authority is balanced and moderated by that of decentralized institutions like the Church or local community. The individual has multiple attachments and loyalties, shaping his character and providing fraternity. The most immediate is his family, while ethnicity or nationality gives him a corporate capacity. Socialisation occurs within a national arena, where symbols of national identity such as language and history provide the context in which individual perceptions and identity are formed. For many conservatives, the Church is a focus of allegiance, linking man with his Creator and imbuing society with Christian principles. Coleridge (1972), Cecil (1912) and Eliot (1939) all stressed the importance of religion to the English national character and the role of the Church in



preserving Christian lifestyles.<sup>2</sup> But in an increasingly secular society, the influence of the Anglican Church has declined, with patriotism taking over the integrative functions of state religion. This integrative patriotism does not rule out local attachments and identities: conservatives welcome active membership in and allegiance to the locality (Wordsworth, 1809; Baldwin, 1937 & 1938). Conservatism's commitment to the Union has been strengthened by a strong Scottish Tory tradition evident from the time of Sir Walter Scott.<sup>3</sup>

Differences within conservatism arise over the precise nature of the communal links which underpin nationhood. The split is between those who stress the political elements of national identity and those looking to its cultural roots. For those who see the nation as a community defined by culture, the nation is exclusivist and ethnically based, held together by a common culture which distinguishes its members from outsiders. Scruton for example stresses the pre-political nature of the community: the nation as the key communal grouping exists independently of political institutions. Nationhood is a non-political experience: its membership is determined by common culture and is prior to and above the state.

The political nation in contrast defines nationhood and national membership in terms of common allegiance to state institutions, which in turn reflect the national traits such as deference and constitutionalism. This interpretation rejects the idea of a pre-political community, arguing in Oakeshott's case for a conservatism built around civil association where authoritative rules provide integration and a common vernacular (Oakeshott, 1962). The individual is given a greater theoretical role in this liberal-



conservative interpretation with the historical development of state and society revolving around limited government and individual freedom. Both offshoots of the conservative nation will be further discussed below.

#### (iv) Hierarchy.

The conservative nation is hierarchical and structured, with a governing elite acting in the interests of the nation as a whole. The social make-up of this "national class" has changed, from aristocracy to the wealth-creators of the market economy, but the idea of rule by an elite group with special skills remains constant (Eccleshall, 1977). The individual achieves a sense of belonging through his communal role as mentioned above, and also through knowledge of his place in an ordered society. Inequality is an inevitable outcome of social relations: the governing classes though have a duty to protect the interests and well-being of the nation as a whole. The governed recognize the authority and expertise of the ruling group. The conservative idea of community is one of inequality, structure and duty: weaknesses in human nature dictate that society should be ruled by the talented few. Conservatives fear the social unrest and dislocation which mass rule or untamed democracy would bring. Mistrust extends to intellectuals, especially those without roots in the national culture who prefer ideological politics to social realities. Eliot argued that the main function of the ruling class was the transmission and preservation of culture in society (Eliot, 1940).

The "natural aristocracy" of Burke and Disraeli was the national class in the sense that it best understood the national interest and the historical development of the nation. The unequal and hierarchical society

could only be governed only by those with an interest in the nation ie by landowners or the emerging middle class. For Disraeli, the landed aristocracy were the national class because their connections with inherited land and their upbringing as rulers marked them out as an enlightened elite (Disraeli, 1835). The defence of private property and its unequal ownership has been a key part of the conservative project from the industrial revolution, when Tories sought to uphold agrarian patterns of ownership and production, to the democratic age in which conservatives elicit popular support for extended, but unequal, ownership (Aughey et al, 1992, pp. 55-78). The conservative nation though does not explicitly focus on the relationship between man, land and nation, unlike continental Romanticism or fascist ideas of the nation. The idea of rule by a privileged group also reflects the conservative ideal of an "Establishment" upholding the high culture and social responsibility eg Coleridge's *Clerisy* (Aughey et al, 1992, pp. 98-113). Rule by an enlightened or hereditary elite is associated with continuity, discipline and social order. "One nation" conservatism fostered a paternalistic view of the duties of the ruling class; liberal-conservatism looks to individuals working within the free-market economy to bring national prosperity (with greater wealth trickling down to all classes) and uphold national prestige. Both traditions have the few using their talents to benefit the wider whole. Lord Salisbury claimed that rule by an enlightened minority was the optimal state of affairs:

"Always wealth, in some countries birth, in all intellectual power and culture, mark out the men to whom, in a healthy state of feeling, a community looks to undertake government." (Quoted in Pinto-Duschinsky, 1967, p. 115).

The integrative nature of the hierarchical community is also apparent in Disraeli's view of the Conservative Party as the national and patriotic party, working to improve the condition of the people. Social divisions threaten national unity and patriotic bonds between the classes: the governed must be part of the nation or the bonds of community are loosened. But "one nation" conservatism was not a "citizenship" nationalism for it was opposed to extensive rights and mass participation in political life. Integrative state nationalism was a means of disguising class divisions and ensuring the continued rule of a conservative elite. The national community is a structured one where each individual has a place: all classes owe allegiance to the state while the governing classes have paternalistic duties.

"Man is born into society, into a family and into a nation and, by the mere fact of existence, assumes inescapable duties towards his fellows and is endowed with the rights of membership of that society" (David Clarke, quoted in Buck, 1975, p. 166).

The embracement of the capitalist market economy by contemporary conservatism has weakened the idea of a structured, hierarchical society. Inequality is still an inescapable fact in the market economy, although its advocates claim that those who benefit from the workings of the market do so by merit. John Major's vision of a "classless society" is not an egalitarian one, but one in which each individual is treated according to his personal attributes so that his achievements are earned on merit. The market economy is also the environment in which the modern conservative vision of a "property-owning democracy" can be realized. The wider ownership of consumer goods, shares and housing indicate a move towards greater equality and a rise in the standards of living which offsets the inevitable



differences between rich and poor. However, conservatives still support the principle of inherited wealth and the market economy is far from a perfect meritocracy (Hoover & Plant, 1989). Ferdinand Mount provides an interesting account of contemporary conservative views on inequality and hierarchy, noting three styles of thinking: (a) the High Tory which thinks that society is inevitably hierarchical eg Sir Peregrine Worsthorne; (b) the Middle Tory who sees inequality as a matter of practical efficiency, providing incentives; (c) the Low Tory who sees a tendency towards greater equality in the liberal capitalist economy and embraces the idea of a "property-owning democracy" eg Ian Macleod whose views John Major is known to admire (Mount, 1990).

#### (v) Anti-Rationalism.

The conservative concept of the nation reflects conservatism's anti-rationalist style. In outlining the chief characteristics of the national community, conservatism's focus is on empirical realities and specific circumstances rather than on abstract accounts of national criteria. The subjective element of nationhood is emphasized: the nation's identity and unity spring from shared experience and common values. Conservatism is not a nationalist ideology: its rationale is not centered around an abstract account of nationhood or based in an end-state account of national unity or strength as the ultimate political goal.

Whereas nationalist ideology offers universalist accounts of nationhood, the conservative adopts an empirical approach, looking specifically at the British nation-state. The values of the conservative nation tend towards

state-patriotism (a respect for and allegiance to traditional institutions) not ideological nationalism, but conservative politics have of course taken on the characteristics of expansionist, aggressive nationalism on occasion. Here state-patriotism (itself strongly conservative given the nature of the British nation-state) becomes more overtly political, often in the face of an identified external enemy (Newman, 1987; Doob, 1963). Thus, conservative forces directed their nationalist rhetoric against enemies at home and abroad during the French Revolutionary Wars, while in the late nineteenth century the Conservative Party made use of jingoism and imperialist rhetoric. Conservative thought however tends to be nostalgic or parochial, notably in Baldwin's use of homespun themes of rural England or in Allison's account of cricket as the epitome of the conservative mind (Baldwin, 1938; Allison, 1984). Eliot's list of England's cultural traditions, which includes the Henley Regatta, Cowes and the Glorious Twelfth, is a reminder of the conservative focus on the high culture of the English establishment (Eliot, 1940). Conservatism is faced with the problematic task of protecting a high culture which is appreciated only by a minority, while ensuring that conservative values find their way into popular culture (Aughey et al, 1992, pp. 104-113).

Conservatives are sceptical of rationalist politics which seek to impose an end-goal or set pattern on political decision-making. Instead they look to evolutionary change which runs with the grain of tradition and respects limited government. Allison believes that such political scepticism is the defining feature of conservative thought. For him, conservatism is non-ideological, even "negative" in character, shaped by its opposition to

"humanism" rather than by a coherent rationale of its own (Allison,1984).

Aughey agrees that there is:

"a basic negativity at the heart of conservatism,a reluctance to formulate principles or slogans that fail to capture the subtelties of political life..Each period of history will exhibit its own peculiar blend of conservative thought and politics,the purpose of which is to defuse radical attacks on the political order and to adjust principle in terms of the workable and the convenient" (Aughey,1986,pp.30-31).

Oakeshottian conservatives reject the "inclusivist" account of ideology which argues that all politics are necessarily ideological in character. O'Sullivan compares conservatism as "formal" or "limited" politics,concerned with the maintenance of procedural conditions and legitimacy,with "activist" or "programmatic" politics which have an express aim or purpose (O'Sullivan, 1976 & 1989,b).He argues that the term "ideology" makes no sense when applied to conservative thought which lacks a programmatic vision of what men are like and how society should be shaped.Levy argues that conservatism is not an ideology because it derives from a pre-ideological view of politics and society (Levy,1985).Conservatism places a great deal of emphasis on "circumstance" and the need for pragmatic action.Graham argues that pragmatism or a non-ideological politics is possible in connection with a conception of the limited state,but recognises the philosophical scepticism and specific interpretations of politics and the past which are found in conservative thought (Graham,1989).It is my belief that conservatism is made up of a configuration of values which give it the character of a political doctrine,but its scepticism,particularism and pragmatism means that it does not share the programmatic world-view common to ideological systems of thought.



The conservative nation is a distinctive account, but one linked to a tradition of "limited politics" rather than the ideological or "activist" politics of many nationalist doctrines. It is a reflection of conservatism's anti-rational character, its scepticism and the importance that opposition to radicalism plays in shaping conservative discourse. The conservative nation is often parochial and its patriotism latent, but the cultural account of the nation found on the New Right is more programmatic than either Burkean or Oakeshottian conservatism, looking to an ideal society in which the nation is culturally homogeneous. British conservatism is also shaped by the policies and actions of the Conservative Party, which has on occasion blatantly nationalistic rhetoric, politicizing the conservative nation and giving it a populist slant.

#### Myths and Symbols.

The theoretical elements of the conservative nation are backed up by the use of myths and symbols of national identity, giving it a populist and mobilising character.<sup>5</sup> These myths have tended to arise at times of crisis or when national identity is being challenged. The main theorists of the conservative nation such as Burke, Disraeli and Powell all sought to redefine and revitalize the conservative concept of nationhood in the face of external and internal challenges. In Burke's case the support for the abstract principles of the French Revolution, notably that of popular sovereignty, by English radicals prompted him to redefine the nation as an organic and hierarchical entity (Burke, 1986).

The most significant use of political myths to bolster the conservative nation came in the late 19th century with the development of myths of imperialism, Unionism, race and the monarchy. The "invention of tradition" and appetite for nostalgia is common to nationalist doctrines, being part of the intellectual and political reconstruction of the past for nationalist purposes (Smith, 1986; Boerner, 1986; Anderson, 1983). Conservatives from Burke to Churchill and Thatcher have all had a political interest in reworking history in a conservative light. The conservative account of national development is characterized by the organic view of history it presents, though much of it is mythical, ignoring an alternative tradition of popular sovereignty and radicalism. The role of the monarchy was transformed by "invented traditions" and popular ceremonials in which the monarch became a symbol of national unity and continuity. The personal unpopularity of Queen Victoria in the 1860s was replaced by a populist commercialization of the royal family eg in the Jubilee celebrations (Pugh, 1985; Cannadine, 1986).<sup>6</sup>

Unionist politics entered centre stage when the Union with Ireland was being challenged by Irish nationalism and some Liberals at the end of the 19th century. Chamberlain campaigned for the Union, imperialism and social reform, developing a patriotic domestic image and portraying the Liberals as a threat to national prestige (Chamberlain, 1914). Unionist politics and culture helped create a viable British identity when no British ethnic or nation as such exists. This Unionist or British identity employs a state-based notion of membership: allegiance to the common institutions and constitutional principles of the Union is the shared experience at the heart of the British national community. The territorial integration of the United Kingdom is incomplete though: the component nations retain their own

separate traditions, historical experiences and even different modes of government (Bulpitt, 1983; Keating, 1988; Kearney, 1989). Unionism was grafted on to the theoretical basis of the conservative nation, itself rooted in the experiences and values of an English minority and their high culture, to provide a cross-ethnic means of identity and cohesion.

The economic benefits of empire strengthened the state-patriotism of the Unionist political culture. Imperialism emerged as the most effective populist and mobilising myth in the armoury of the conservative nation. Chamberlain and Salisbury orchestrated Conservative jingoism and social imperialism, spreading the Conservative's image as the patriotic party (Cunningham, 1989; Schwarz, 1986). Imperialist rhetoric extended the party's integrative message, attracting support from all classes and ethnic groups. Imperial myths promoted images of national greatness, a golden age and national mission. Conservative writers cultivated myths of a continuous Anglo-Saxon tradition in British history whereas in pre-Victorian times radical forces had used myths of the Anglo-Saxon constitution and the free-born Englishmen (Mehan, 1991; Thompson, 1980). Racial myths proclaimed the superiority and civilisation of the British race, strengthening the hand of the nationalist Right and giving undeserved credence to Social Darwinist theories (Eldridge, 1984).<sup>7</sup> Myths of racial superiority and national mission were widespread in conservative thought and in Conservative Party rhetoric from Chamberlain in the 1890s to the Tory Right in the 1930s (Webber, 1986). The general tone of the age was one in which imperial and racial myths were often used and accepted across political divides, but the Conservative Party was the most successful in using imperialist rhetoric for its own political purposes.



Imperial myths also had negative implications for the conservative nation. By linking the party so closely with Empire, it suffered from any popular backlash against imperial commitments (Cunningham, 1986). Extending patriotism and a sense of unity across the Empire proved unrealistic and its universalizing outlook detracted from the conservative nation's core values. Themes of common allegiance and interests across the Empire set in store problems of immigration control for future Conservatives. The decline in imperial self-confidence after the Boer War produced a retreat into mythical notions of "merrie England". Baldwin's evocation of the rural English landscape marked a return to parochialism and "golden age" wistfulness in conservative circles. But the ghost of Britain's imperial past continued to cast a long shadow over conservative accounts of nationhood and would not be exorcised until Powell recognized the contribution of imperial myths to national self-doubt.

Myths are historical artefacts, reactions to a particular set of historical problems. The myths of empire and Union brought for the Conservative Party an invaluable image as the national and patriotic party at a time when the genesis of mass democracy threatened conservative forces. The conservative nation had added populism to its theoretical repertoire, but as imperial and economic strength drained away and the Union again came under challenge from the peripheral nations, the myths lost their potency and became unwelcome baggage for a conservatism seeking to adapt to new challenges. Unionism has lost much of its mobilizing strength: in Scotland, where conservative politics are predominantly Unionist, disputes over devolution, allegiance plus a Scottish versus Unionist identity and traditions have weakened the Conservative Party and Scottish conservatism

(Mitchell,1990).On Northern Ireland issues,Conservatives have been unable to end the political impasse while close links with the Unionist parties have been eroded.Northern Ireland remains a special case:it is not fully integrated into the UK political system and the Conservative commitment to the Province's constitutional position is a conditional one. Unionism is no longer a coherent platform or a key feature of conservative discourse.Powell drew attention to the malaise in the relationship between conservatism and Unionism,but propagated myths of ethnic homogeneity and effective British sovereignty.

The concept of the nation is an important element of conservative thought and a distinctive brand of nationalist doctrine. The conservative nation is a community of subjective identity,hierarchical structuring and organic evolution.It provides unity and continuity,a sense of social belonging and links the people with state institutions.But it is not a uniform or monolithic structure within British conservatism.Two divergent accounts of the nation have been significant in conservative thought,a cultural account and a political account.Both take themes inherent in the conservative nation and redefine them according to the individualist or authoritarian branches of conservatism of which they are part.

#### The Cultural Account.

The cultural account of nationhood in British conservatism has a long tradition,encompassing the organicist thought of the English Romantics and the more recent cultural nationalism of the authoritarian New Right.This strand of conservatism is defined by its emphasis on the pre-political

basis of national community and opposition to individualist methodology. A common culture is the central feature of nationhood, providing a means of understanding and shared experience for the national community. The community is not primarily political: membership of the national community is independent of and prior to the contractual basis of citizenship fostered by the liberal state. Patriotism is the outward expression of the subjective sense of communal identity, creating a public spirit and unity which cannot exist in a state built only on contractual relations between fundamentally asocial individuals. State and nation are separate entities: only when the state can harness the corporate identity and personality of the nation can it enjoy allegiance and loyalty. For Scruton:

"The legitimacy of the state depends upon its ability to overcome the separation inherent in civil society, and to recuperate in free and legal form the sense of belonging which surrounds us at birth and nurtures our identity." (Scruton, 1990, p. 84).

The cultural definition of nationhood offered by the authoritarian wing of the New Right is highly critical of the individualist outlook of liberal-conservatism (Scruton, 1984). For the cultural conservative, the individual is the product of the social order, dependent on membership of the nation and allegiance to national institutions for his identity. The liberal account of individual freedom is a dangerous abstraction, ignoring themes of authority, allegiance and communal identity. The constitution of the nation-state reflects organic growth and national character.

The English Romantics Coleridge and Wordsworth also used a cultural conception of nationhood, but one drawing on the organic theories of continental Romanticism as well as Burkean values (Cobban, 1962; Mendilow,



1986).The individual is seen as a product of Nature,and society an organic growth.The conservative link between individual and society is adhered to: man is conditioned by his environment but is not its captive,modifying it to reflect change thus furthering the organic evolution of society.The individual achieves full humanity when his personality is an expression of his national belonging:Wordsworth stressed the value of patriotism and attachment to the locality.These are Burkean themes drawing on the conservative nation,but given a Romantic slant which elevates the spirit of Nature and looks to harmony between man and his environment. Coleridge espoused conservative values of authority,hierarchy and tradition,while encouraging the paternalism and social conservatism which influenced Disraeli in his Young England phase.

The cultural account of the nation draws upon many of the values inherent in the conservative nation,but adds its own distinctive cultural and communal emphasis.Nationhood is defined in terms of subjective experiences of common identity and experience,but the main bond of community is a pre-political common culture.Organicism, authority, hierarchy and the importance of tradition are all core values.Cultural conservatives on the New Right have moved towards ethnic and ideological accounts of nationhood in which membership of the national community depends upon commitment to the culture of the English establishment.

At its extremes then the cultural definition of nationhood expresses doctrines alien to that of the conservative nation. Themes of a primarily ethnic basis to national identity,the subordination of the individual's freedom and interests to the needs of the national whole and a tendency to

identify culture with race are parts of Right-wing thought which conservatism and the conservative nation should regard as extreme and unwelcome. The conservative nation must adapt to identify with the plural society, with unity to be based on patriotism and community. It should now move towards a civic-ethnic Anglo-British concept of nationhood in which individual and community are not antithetical, but are linked by communal identity and ordered liberty.

#### The Political Account.

The other major theoretical offshoot of the conservative nation focuses on the political or state-based dimensions of membership of the national community, finding expression in liberal-conservative thought. Its emphasis is on political association and individualism, with Oakeshott's concept of civil association and O'Sullivan's attack on the social politics of the cultural conservatives as two prime examples (Oakeshott, 1962; O'Sullivan, 1976 & 1989, a).

The political nation defends the constitutional development of the British state, particularly its emphasis on the rule of law, a balance of power and the distinction between state and civil society which gives the individual legal citizenship. It is this citizenship and membership of the political community which brings individual identity and freedom coupled with communal unity and belonging. This liberal-conservative concept of citizenship contrasts with the Tory tradition in which members of the political community have the status of subjects with a duty of obedience to state authority. It is though a limited account of citizenship, focusing on the

legal aspects of membership of the political community, contrasting with socialist accounts of welfare rights and active participation in decision-making. O'Sullivan is critical of Scruton's cultural conservatism for its emphasis on pre-political social unity and his desire to reintegrate state and society. He notes:

"The introduction of this pre-political unity creates a strong current of anti-constitutionalist thought in Scruton's work since he is convinced that not all the organs of the established constitution articulate the real social self properly." (O'Sullivan, 1989, a, p. 179).

Rather than being based on common cultural belonging, civil order is founded on impersonal law and legitimate state power. The institutions of the state provide for common identity and belonging as they are expressions of the values of the English people. Membership of the nation is not determined by ethnicity but by the political values and traditions of the people which find expression in their constitutional arrangements. The individual is a part of the political community because of his consent to its constitution: authority must be legitimate and accountable to the political community. Oakeshott's idea of civil association is one of limited government based around rules of conduct such as the rule of law and the separation of state and society. British constitutionalism combines tradition and individualism: constitutional principles and legal citizenship are the bases of political community and bring integration and unity.

The idea of the political nation as espoused by Oakeshott is a liberal-conservative one, recognizing the importance of tradition but presenting a Whig account of the development of constitutional government. Society is seen in a pluralist mode: independent from state power, decentralized and



with countervailing spheres of power. Corporatism and rationalism are perceived as alien to the British political tradition. Patriotism arises from a deep allegiance to this political tradition and a regard for it as the optimum means of integration and membership. In liberal-conservatism, the concept of community is a limited one, based on individual consent and feelings of attachment. Culture is an expression of human traditions, not an autonomous entity. In the writings of some liberal-conservatives, notably Hayek, nationhood is not regarded as a central aspect of the political community although the nation-state is recognized as the dominant political unit of the modern age. Here the political account of society has only a loose idea of community and its national character is ignored or even rejected.

The political nation uses the ideas of tradition, community and the gradual development of national institutions to espouse a liberal-conservative focus on political community. However, it is difficult to assess the precise point at which the political account of the nation is no longer a conservative one. The works of thinkers like Oakeshott, Hayek or Brittan illustrate this problem (see Chapter Three). To qualify as a conservative account, the values of tradition, evolutionary development, natural inequality and community should be present (Staal, 1987; Gray, 1991). Generally speaking an emphasis on the traditional national community acts as a useful indicator in determining whether New Right neo-liberals qualify as conservatives. Although Oakeshott regards ideas of community as dangerously close to rationalism, his ideas of patriotic allegiance and social relations at least contain the seeds of a concept of the nation as a politically-defined group (Oakeshott, 1962 & 1975). The political account of the nation is

one of state patriotism. The individual is not asocial, but is a member of a national community which produces a whole greater than the aggregate of its component parts through patriotism and civic spirit. Nozick cannot be included as a conservative because of his refusal to grant notions of community beyond those voluntary exchange and protection groups which have little character beyond that of their members.<sup>2</sup> Individualism which ignores the social role of the person as a member of a political community with some autonomy - though one bound by the rule of law and the separation of state and civil society to protect the individual from the excesses of ideological notions of the collective good - or places the defence of capitalism above national unity or legitimate authority is best seen as a manifestation of liberalism rather than moderate conservatism.

#### Alternative Accounts of the Nation.

As I noted earlier, conservative thought is sceptical and empirical, rejecting the rationalism of ideological projects in favour of the wisdom found in tradition and the existing order. This philosophical scepticism often means that its attitudes are in part shaped by the doctrines which it opposes. Historically then, the character of the conservative nation has emerged in response to radical accounts of the nation. The success of the conservative concept in becoming the dominant account of the nation in British politics does not mean that it has a monopoly over the language of nationhood, but shows that it had managed to meet and overcome the challenges posed by other accounts. The conservative theory of the nation was first espoused by Edmund Burke as a response to what was then the

dominant account of the nation: a radical ideal based on popular sovereignty whose roots can be traced back to the English Civil War. Here the nation is equated with the people or the popular will: its values include equal citizenship, voluntary membership and a democratic community. Nationality and democratic citizenship are linked: the national community should be based on equality and popular rule. It is a political nation based on radical and democratic citizenship rather than liberal-conservative values of constitutionalism and minority rule. Burke's conservative nation also countered French democratic Jacobin nationalism as expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man or in the rhetoric of Abbé Sieyès (Schwarzmantel, 1991).<sup>9</sup>

The conservative nation is a hierarchical community, ruled by an experienced governing class: popular sovereignty and the will of the people are alien to it. The conservative nation values unity, social cohesion and traditional authority whereas the radical ideal is of patriotism as an oppositional force, English history as a struggle for the rights of the people to govern themselves, and is critical of state authoritarianism. Recent historical scholarship, grouped around the History Workshop, has emphasized the radical element in English nationalism which dates back to the Civil War when Puritan ideals of individual liberty and equality were matched against ecclesiastical and state authority (Samuel, 1989). Radical and oppositional patriotism, using myths of the Anglo-Saxon constitution and the "free-born Englishman" was also found in the works of Paine, Price, Wilkes and the Chartists. Its historical decline has been traced to the emergence of a conservative culture and to the state's role in promoting a conservative nationalism through imperialist rhetoric, "invented traditions",



and its portrayal of radicals as anti-patriotic (Newman,1987;Cunningham, 1989). In this thesis though,the emphasis is on conservative thought and the values of the conservative nation,which have been durable yet flexible enough to allow successful responses to changing circumstances.But accounts of the nation by the British Left have recovered in recent years, moving away from the conservative tone of Orwell's writings on the nation (1954 & 1968), to again offer a coherent intellectual challenge to the conservative nation.<sup>10</sup>

The conservative concept of the nation,especially in its cultural mode which looks to pre-political community,developed as a critique of the atomistic individualism of some liberal thought.In classical liberal nationalism, national independence is linked with individual autonomy:both individual and nation are to be free to determine the course of their own affairs.Greta Jones argues that conservatives have accepted much of the liberal account of the nation,including its focus on citizenship within a territorial state and the Whig view of the constitution (Aughey et al,1992, pp.79-97).On the question of the nation,conservatism has again shown itself capable of change without losing the essence of the civic-ethnic concept of nationhood.Liberal-conservatism has combined liberal values of individual freedom and limited government with conservative themes of community and tradition. To some extent then conservatism has minimized the threat of liberal ideals of nationhood by synthesizing what it sees as its more attractive elements with values of its own eg in the conservative espousal of Whig history. Modern conservatism thus values both the community and the market,fusing Whig and Tory values (Willetts,1992). Liberals like J.S.Mill have also blurred the distinction between liberalism and

conservatism by recognizing the importance of the historic national community (Mill,1962).<sup>13</sup>

The conservative nation differs fundamentally from the deterministic and racialist nationalism found on the continental Right. The scepticism and moderate character of British conservatism and its commitment to limited politics distinguishes it from the ideology of the far Right. At the time of Burke's work on the conservative nation in Britain, Fichte produced an organic account of the nation in which the nation was valued above the individual and defined in terms of an ethnically homogeneous linguistic group (Reiss,1955). For Fichte, the German Volk was Europe's dominant nation and had to maintain its culture and practice national self-subsistence. While Disraeli and Chamberlain popularized the conservative nation in the late nineteenth century, the French Right turned to the proto-fascistic nationalism of Action Francaise as expressed by Barres and Maurras (Curtis, 1959; Sutton,1982; Soucy,1972). This integral nationalism saw individuals as totally subordinate to the nation: without the nation, the individual is nothing for his very essence is determined by his membership of the nation. The nation is also ethnically exclusivist and anti-democratic: aliens are to be expelled and parliamentary democracy replaced by a strong monarchy. Integral nationalism is strongly anti-rational, glorifying "the soil and the dead", charismatic leadership and aggressive expansionism.

Although the conservative nation has largely remained doctrinally distinct from the nationalism of the continental Right, the imperialist and militarist nationalisms of the British Right have at times influenced the character of conservative accounts of the nation. The British Right has

rarely been organized or politically significant on a wide scale, but the Tory Right has often espoused racist and nationalist politics (Webber, 1986). Racial myths claiming the superiority of the British race and its mission to "civilise" or conquer "backward" areas were widespread and influential for several decades from the Disraelian era onwards. Conservatives of the time incorporated racial ideas into the conservative nation, but sociobiological conjecture on the superiority of races did not infiltrate the conservative nation to a major extent. The Conservative Party and conservative ideologues have used racialist discourse, but racism is parasitic on the "ideal type" conservative nation. The conservative nation emphasizes the particular, whereas racism is a universalist doctrine. Balibar notes that notions of racial or cultural ties go beyond attachment to the nation; ideas of racial unity run counter to the conservative nation's emphasis on the shared experiences and feelings found in the nation-state (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, pp. 59-61). The conservative nation may not easily lend itself to ethnic pluralism, built as it is on the historical experiences and values of Anglo-British elites, but neither is it inherently racist. It is not a closed account of the nation, but its emphasis on continuity of traditions and the importance of the past means that first and second generation immigrants do not share the same subjective experiences of nationhood. Where racial myths have permeated the conservative nation, it tends to be as a reflection of the wider social beliefs of that particular era. They are largely peripheral to its concept of the nation, and at best alien to and distinct from it.



## Summary and Conclusions.

British conservatism has developed its own distinctive brand of nationalist doctrine. This draws on core conservative values and reactions to particular historical experiences to present a moderate, non-ideological account of the nation which the Conservative Party, using myths of imperialism, has popularized. For a summary of the conservative nation, Julian Amery is worth quoting at length:

"In the Tory view a nation is more than a conglomeration of individuals. It has a past and a future; and the men and women who form its population are at any given time not the only interested party. They are the heirs of its history and the trustees of its posterity.. The nation is made up of a network of loyalties, individuals to each other, to their families, to their professions, to their localities, to their distinctive cultures, and to their fellowships. Far from being a denial of the brotherhood of man, their loyalties constitute the way in which human fraternity manifests itself in history and practice, as opposed to the literature of political philosophy." (J. Amery, 1975, p. 29).

The conservative account of the nation is shaped by a belief in the value of tradition, in the organic development of the state, in a hierarchical community and by conservative negativism and anti-rationalism. These values are well represented in the works of Burke, Disraeli, Powell and others whose contribution to the conservative nation at crucial times will be examined in more detail in the following chapters. But the conservative nation is not uniform or unchallenged. In practice it is dynamic, reacting to change and defining itself in relation to forces which it opposes, while theoretically it has two distinct sub-groupings, the political nation and the cultural nation which reflect the different sides of the civic-ethnic mix found in the conservative nation proper.

The success of the conservative nation in becoming the dominant expression of nationhood in British politics has both theoretical and environmental explanations. The "nation" is a malleable and contested concept: the character of any nationalist doctrine is influenced by the idea of the nation which is used, and this depends on both theoretical and environmental factors.<sup>13</sup> There is no single political doctrine with which nationalism is inevitably and naturally linked. Instead nationalism may, in specific cases, be associated with different doctrines, from fascism to liberalism to socialism. The idea that nationalism in Britain is inevitably conservative is therefore wrong. The dominant position of the conservative nation is not a natural one: it developed from specific theoretical and environmental circumstances which together allowed for the appropriation of the language of nationhood by conservative forces.<sup>14</sup>

Some of nationalism's more attractive and positive values are also present in conservative thought, making the conservative nation an unusually resilient and fertile hybrid. Nationalism appeals to man's desire to be part of a community with people who share his experiences and social values. Conservatism too sees man as a social animal, finding his identity in his group relations with the national community as a crucial arena of social integration. Patriotism is for conservatives a natural phenomenon which links man with his compatriots across the generations. Nationalism is "Janus-faced" looking to the nation's past to find the expressions of unity and continuity which will allow it to progress in the future. Though not a modernizing or reformist nationalism, the conservative account of the nation values tradition and reveres the past. The organic account of state development found in conservative thought is not as detrimental to



individual autonomy as the deterministic accounts of integral nationalists. For Burke, organic development means that state institutions reflect the national character of the people, linking state and civil society thus providing effective allegiance and authority.

Conservative doctrine also mirrors some of the core factors identified by students of nationalism. The focus on organic evolution in conservative thought mirrors the process of nation-building. The conservative nation is an official state-based concept of the nation, emerging at a time when English identity was already well-established, then proceeded to create a state-based Anglo-British identity. Studies of nationalism note the key role of intellectuals in nation-building while conservatism both echoes this belief in the key role of a national elite, and provides examples of thinkers who have redefined the concept of the nation eg Burke. Myths play a vital role in any nationalist doctrine or movement. For British conservatism, this has included myths of imperialism, monarchy and rural England.

Many studies of nationalist doctrine have distinguished between civic and ethnic accounts of the national group, noting the differences between the civic, pluralist accounts found in Western liberal nationalisms and the ethnic accounts of Central plus Eastern European authoritarian, exclusivist nationalisms (Smith, 1991; Schwarzmantel, 1991; Alter, 1989). They do though accept that the distinction between the two is not rigid and that often nationalism contains both civic and ethnic elements. It is my contention that the "ideal type" conservative nation as found in Burke and Disraeli is one of the clearest examples of a doctrine in which the civic and ethnic dimensions of nationhood are fused. In the conservative account, the national



community is defined through the political culture and traditions of the dominant ethnic group, providing a link between state and civil society. Citizenship and nationality are distinct but related themes for the conservative nation. It is not ethnically exclusivist but because it reflects the traditions of the dominant Anglo-British culture, problems exist in integrating those from different backgrounds. Conservatism is not ideologically uniform: its two doctrinal branches, the liberal-conservative and the traditional-authoritarian, have produced their own accounts of the nation which mirror the civic (political) versus ethnic (cultural) divide mentioned above. The conservative nation though is not an expression of ideological nationalism. Conservative theory is instead characterized by scepticism, parochialism and anti-rationalism, though the Conservative Party and conservative ideologues have often been more identifiably nationalist. Even then, the Conservative Party, though the most successful exponent of official state-patriotism, has not always benefitted from its nationalist rhetoric.

The theoretical proximity between some conservative and nationalist values helps explain the success of the conservative nation in dominating British political discourse on the politics of nationhood. This dominance should not though be mistaken for an inevitable monopoly: recent scholarship has emphasized the opportunities for a socialist account of the nation to challenge conservatism's position. Environmental factors also help account for the success of the conservative nation, but here challenges to conservatism have been more effectively realized. The conservative nation is a state-based official nationalism, a doctrinal construct of a state elite which already had a strong sense of identity. The multi-ethnic character of

the British state means that if nationhood is to be integrative it can not be defined along purely ethnic lines. The conservative nation is not merely an expression of English nationalism and the Conservative Party's appeal should not be that of an English Nationalist Party. Though originating in an English or Anglicised elite, it aims to be integrative both territorially (by permitting some peripheral autonomy within a Unionist framework) and socially (through social reforms and populist nationalism). The conservative nation is built on the historical experiences and values of an Anglicised governing class, but has translated its appeal into an Anglo-British state-based identity.

The Conservative Party has played a significant role in translating the theoretical accounts of the conservative nation into practical "politics of nationhood" (ie policies designed to preserve or enhance national identity). Disraeli and Chamberlain transformed the conservative account of the nation into a populist nationalism based on imperialism, social reform and Unionism. The Conservative Party in the late nineteenth century transformed Burkean state patriotism into an official state nationalism, which was again prominent in the Baldwin era. Since the 1960s though the conservative grip over the language of nationhood has been eroded: later chapters will discuss Powell's doomed attempt at reviving a nationalist strategy and the failures of Thatcherism to address issues relevant to national identity. The rhetoric and policies of the Conservative Party are necessarily more pragmatic than conservative theory, so the relationship between party and doctrine is not a clearly defined one. But although it is not a nationalist party, it is through the populism of the Conservative Party's politics of nationhood that the conservative nation has found effective expression. Without the populism and



mobilising force provided by the Conservative Party's appropriation of state-patriotism and use of myths, the conservative nation developed from an intellectual redefinition of the nation to an active politics of nationhood.

I have argued here that an account of nationalism in the United Kingdom needs to look at both the doctrinal coherence of the concept of the nation and at the history and character of ethnic and state relations. In any one state, national identity will be multi-dimensional and different languages of nationalism will exist. Concepts of the nation are shaped by political doctrine and socio-historical circumstance. The nature of the conservative nation is thus influenced by conservative values, the multi-ethnic make-up and Anglo-British state-based identity of the United Kingdom, and the incorporation of myths or invented traditions at certain historical junctures. The next chapters will examine the historical and doctrinal development of the conservative nation in more detail, beginning with the role of Edmund Burke.

#### Footnotes:

1. Nairn sees nationalism as Janus-faced, looking both backwards (to the myths and historic experiences of the nation) and forwards (to a modernized, independent nation-state) (Nairn, 1977). Gellner and Smith stress the role of nationalism as a modernizing ideology seeking the creation of a modern, bureaucratic state-structure (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1986). The emphasis of the conservative nation is though primarily on continuity with the past and it is often nostalgic and reactionary in tone.
2. Anglicanism is often depicted as a central tenet of British conservatism (eg Cecil, Hogg) but this neglects the secular emphasis in some conservative thought (eg Hume, Allison). On Eliot see Michael Iveni: "T.S. Eliot as a Conservative Thinker" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1984. pp. 39-41 and Duke Maskell: "T.S. Eliot as a Conservative Thinker: A Reply" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1985. pp. 29-33.



3. Scottish conservatism has a strongly Scottish and Unionist character, but this has been strained in recent years. The relative autonomy of the Scottish Conservative Party has also declined in the face of party centralization (see Mitchell, 1990). On Scott see Diana Spearman: "Walter Scott as a Conservative Thinker" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1987. pp. 29-32.
4. Private property and inherited wealth are key conservative values, but are not central to the conservative nation. See Chapter Three of Aughey et al, 1992 and Andrew Reeve: *Property*, Macmillan, London, 1986. pp. 152-178. British conservatism rarely stresses the links between man, land and nation which are found in continental Romantic thought. Note though the conservative accounts of the environment examined in Lincoln Allison: *Ecology and Utility: The Philosophical Dilemmas of Planetary Management*, Leicester University Press, 1991.
5. On myths and symbols in nationalist politics see Smith, 1986. For comparative purposes see George Mosse: *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*, New York, 1975.
6. The monarchy has carefully avoided being identified with only one of the United Kingdom's ethnic groups. Note the 1822 visit of George IV to Edinburgh dressed in symbolic tartan and the investiture of the Prince's of Wales at Caernarvon in 1911 and 1969.
7. See Michael Biddiss: *Images of Race*, Leicester University Press, 1979, a collection of Victorian essays on race, including J.W. Jackson's attack on Mill's non-racial concept of the nation.
8. See Robert Nozick: *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1974. Nozick is classed as a conservative in Ted Honderich: *Conservatism*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1990.
9. See Aira Kermilainen: "The Idea of Patriotism During the First Years of the French Revolution" in *History of European Ideas*, vol. 11, 1989. pp. 11-19. This article traces the development of "patriotism" into a term associated with liberal or revolutionary reform.
10. In "The Lion and the Unicorn", Orwell talks of the nation as "a family" with the wrong members in control (Orwell, 1968). His is an often nostalgic and parochial account of national identity, but argues that "patriotism has nothing to do with conservatism" (p. 103). Instead patriotism is predominant in working-class culture, where it is egalitarian. See Gregory Claeys: "The Lion and the Unicorn, Patriotism and Orwell's Politics" in *The Review of Politics*, vol. 7, 1985. pp. 186-211.
11. See Mill's "Essay on Coleridge" and the section on nationality in "On Representative Government". Among other liberals to write on nationality and nationalism were Acton, the British Idealists Green and Bosanquet and Barker. See Julia Stapleton: "The National Character of Ernest Barker's Political Science" in *Political Studies*, vol. 37, 1989. pp. 171-187 for an account of the Whig and Burkean elements in Barker and British Idealism. On the proximity between Whig and Tory historiography in the

19th century see J.W.Burrow: *A Liberal Descent:Victorian Historians and the English Past*, Cambridge University Press,1983.

13. On the idea of "contested concepts" see William Gallie: "Essentially Contested Concepts" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol.56, 1956. pp.167-198.
14. On the persistence of liberal and socialist accounts of the nation see Paul Rich: "A Question of Life and Death to England:Patriotism and the British Intellectuals,c 1886-1945" in *New Community*,vol.15,1984, pp.491-508. Paul Rich: "British Imperial Decline and the Forging of English Patriotic Memory,c 1918-1968" in *History of European Ideas*,vol.9,1988. pp.659-680. Miles Taylor: "Patriotism,History and the Left in Twentieth Century Britain" in *The Historical Journal*,vol.33,1990. pp.971-987.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "CONSERVATIVE NATION".

In this chapter I examine in detail two crucial moments in the development of the "conservative nation". Firstly, the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars when Edmund Burke and then the Romantic theorists Wordsworth and Coleridge produced the first major conservative accounts of the nation and national identity. Second is the late Victorian era of Disraeli, Salisbury and Chamberlain when the Conservative Party developed a popular "national strategy" of integration and imperialism. I will also briefly assess the Baldwin era in which the Conservative Party withstood the challenge of the nationalist Right to maintain its dominance over the language of the "nation".

An English national consciousness had begun to develop well before the emergence of nationalism as a political doctrine at the time of the French Revolution. Also significant was the early emergence of England as a relatively unified and homogeneous nation-state: these two factors meant that English national identity was being formed, at least among the ruling elite, without the presence of a mass nationalist movement or concerted state activity. The early-modern English state had acquired the means of central control through a bureaucratic system of taxation and internal discipline, a well organized standing army, a developing national economy and a territorial state which was for the most part culturally and linguistically homogeneous (Tilly, 1975). This comparatively extensive state penetration was coupled with a ruling elite possessing the necessary pre-requisites of national identity. The English ruling elite was drawn from the



same ethnic background, and their shared historical and political interests were coupled with an emerging sense of national solidarity rather than local rivalry or cosmopolitanism.

For Anthony Smith, the emergence of national identity is related to the presence of a dominant ethnic group, with the precise nature of the national consciousness which springs from this depending on the type of ethnic community involved (Smith, 1986 & 1991). In the case of England, national identity developed among the aristocratic upper strata of landed interest, the state and the established church. A sense of national community among the ruling elite in the Elizabethan era was fostered by a cult of the monarch, the identification of an external enemy and the Protestant character of the English state (Fletcher, 1982). National consciousness became more widespread and hence more politicized in the Civil War when a number of competing accounts of the nation flourished. Patriotism was a doctrinal weapon of both radicals and loyalists: as yet the state was playing no significant role in spreading an official nationalism. Hans Kohn's classic examination of English national consciousness in the Civil War period emphasises the connection between Puritanism and radical patriotism (Kohn, 1940). He argues that Englishmen became more aware of their national Protestant religion and equated this with a quest for greater liberty from ecclesiastical and state authority. But loyalist patriotism was also forming around support for the hierarchical constitution, the monarchy and the established church (Furtado, 1989).

The recent revival of academic interest in the emergence of different patriotisms and concepts of the nation has tended to focus on the late

eighteenth century (Newman,1987; Colley, 1986 & 1989).In this era the influential radical patriotism and its identification of the "nation" with popular sovereignty and civic rights lost political ground to an emergent conservative patriotism,developed by conservative ideologues rather than by the state itself.Gerald Newman treats English nationalism in the same way as other nationalisms by tracing the rise of a nationalist movement among intellectuals and artists in the latter half of the eighteenth century (Newman,1987).Ethnic consciousness among this elite was translated into practical moves such as literary quests for the essence of Englishness and community,the use of national symbols such as John Bull and Britannia,and anti-French sentiment.The English national identity was morally elevated through the mythical ideal of "national sincerity" and the virtues of the English character,taking radical political shape in demands for popular sovereignty.

Although a number of intellectuals and literary figures shaped a concept of the nation in the late eighteenth century,the English case differed from other instances of nationalist politics because a mass nationalist movement did not emerge.Nationalist movements tend to undergo several phases in their development,the first of which is the intellectual stage on which Newman's study of English nationalism concentrates.Hroch notes that nationalist politics have three main stages: (a) a period of scholarly interest in which intellectuals revive the study of the national culture and past; (b) a period of patriotic agitation by the intelligentsia and professional classes,often in opposition to foreign or authoritarian rule; (c) the rise of a mass nationalist movement incorporating members of all social strata,with nationalist rhetoric and themes spreading through



society (Hroch,1985). No one class has a fixed or necessary role in the emergence of nationalist politics (Hroch,p.129),but it is significantly shaped by the character of the social groups which play the key roles in each of these phases.In the case of English nationalism,the initial period of scholarly interest was followed by limited patriotic agitation, marking the politicization of a pre-existing national consciousness. Nationalist language was though largely confined to the upper reaches of a society lacking the mass participation and communications needed to spread popular nationalism. The radical impetus of much of this patriotic agitation became stunted in the 1790s with the growth of popular loyalism and the emergence of a coherent conservative account of English national identity. The takeover of the concept of the nation by conservative forces was further enhanced by the growing role of the state in fostering national identity in the nineteenth century,culminating in the official state nationalism propogated in the Disraelian era.

The American War of Indepedence and the French Revolutionary Wars brought a greater awareness by the ruling elite of the potency of nationalist appeals,and the beginning of a difficult period for radical patriots (Cunningham, 1989; Schwarz,1986).Pitt the Younger's government suppressed domestic radicalism and recognized the value of patriotic appeals in uniting the ruling elite (O'Gorman,1989).But the most significant expressions of conservative patriotism emanted not from the state but from conservative ideologues and popular loyalist movements.Linda Colley notes that governments of the time feared that if the state actively encouraged nationalism this would open the doors to mass participation in politics, undermining the stable,hierarchical structure of society (Colley,1986).The



state welcomed but did not actively encourage the development of the popular loyalist "Reeves Societies" in 1792 (Dickinson,1989).Its role in the spread of conservative patriotism was limited to equating national pride and achievement with the reign of George III (Colley,1984). Conservative propagandists stressed the benefits of the settled English constitution, urged patriotic support for nation and monarchy, and attacked the Jacobin appeal to "reason" (Schofield,1986).The most significant figure in the development of a conservative patriotism though was Edmund Burke whose 1790 "Reflections on the Revolution in France" achieved high sales and great influence.

Although Hume and Bolingbroke - often classed as conservative thinkers - had written on "national character" in the eighteenth century, neither of them provided a "modern" conservative doctrine or a coherent account of the nation.This only emerged with Burke's reaction to the emergence of a radical nationalist ideology in the French Revolution.Hume saw man as a social animal and in his essay "Of National Characteristics" argued that "moral causes" such as the nature of government were important in shaping national character (Hume,1964). But Hume rejected myths of continuity in British history and claimed that the high level of diversity in English society meant that it had no clear national character.Rather than being an organic community, "a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals" (Hume,1964,p.244).Bolingbroke's "The Patriot King" espoused the virtues of national unity and balanced government,but did not refer to patriotism or national identity in the sense associated with Burke (Bolingbroke,1967).

## Edmund Burke and the Conservative Nation.

Edmund Burke provided the English ruling elite with the first coherent conservative statement of political philosophy. His account of the nation was an important counterpart to radical patriotism (his "Reflections" was a response to Richard Price's 'A Discourse on the Love of our Country') and paved the way for the appropriation of nationalist rhetoric by conservative forces. Burke set out a conservative account of the development of the English state using the themes of organicism, tradition, community and hierarchy I outlined as the core of the conservative nation in the previous chapter. It is in Burke's discussions of man's "second nature", the basis of national character and the importance of the nation as a community, that the conservative nation is first outlined.

For Burke, the strength of the English state lies in its longevity and organicism. The constitution has evolved over the course of centuries, reflecting the wisdom of past generations: it is not an artificial creation based on abstract principle, as the Jacobins sought to construct in revolutionary France, but one built on tradition, emerging from the national past and reflecting the national character. English history is presented as a fluid and consistent progress towards the mixed constitution culminating in the Glorious Revolution and Declaration of Right.

"From Magna Carta to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to posterity." (Burke, 1986, p. 119).

His account of English history is consistent with the role played by nationalist intellectuals in re-interpreting the national past and developing myths of national glory or a golden age. Though on part a Whig appraisal of the development of the mixed constitution and its principles of liberty and balanced government, Burke also offered a defence of existing institutions from those who would have them restructured according to "reason". In particular, Burke claimed that the Glorious Revolution was fundamentally different from the French Revolution and was Britain's last major constitutional development. Thus, "the Declaration of Right is the cornerstone of our constitution as reinforced, explained, improved and in its fundamental principles forever settled" (Burke, 1986, p. 100). It was consistent with the national character of the English and ran with the grain of tradition, comparing favourably with the upheaval caused in France by non-traditional change. Burke's political career reflected his interest in preserving the balanced constitution, his "On the Present Discontents" arguing that united parties were needed to promote the national interest and curb the power of the "King's Party". Burke's last years were dominated by his concern to defend the hierarchical constitution from the threat of domestic Jacobinism.

Thus for Burke, the English constitution reflected both the accumulated wisdom of the past and the essential character of the English people. He suggests that in a stable polity, institutions must be in accord with the values and habits of the nation. The French Revolution ignored the character of the French people and the nation's political traditions and was thus doomed to failure. The Jacobin suppression of Christianity runs against the grain of French national values and habits. In England though civil society



is based on Christian values and these are at the core of the national character. The state should be based on mutual duties and interests between the major groups in society: only in this way can it claim authority. The English national character values ordered liberty and rule by a natural aristocracy. Englishmen recognize that the constitution reflects morality, natural law and national habits, so adopt a largely deferential attitude. Though Burke was concerned by the extent of radical support in the country, he believed most people supported the existing institutional arrangements.

"Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field..or that, after all, they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour." (Burke, 1986, p.181).

Burke's writings offer only occasional accounts of national character and identity, but these are nonetheless important elements of his conservative nation. Cultural differences between national communities are the result of differing habits and prejudices, not human nature. These form man's "second nature", so although men share the same feelings of pleasure and pain, people from different societies have different traditions (Dreyer, 1979, pp 54-67). The customs and values of a society were the basis of its national or historical character, yet this was not static or racially determined. The relationship between state institutions and national character must be mutually compatible if stability was to be assured. The imposition of "reasoned" principles on a society threatens traditional habits.

Burke was critical of policy towards the American colonies, arguing that the government was wrong not to apply the English tradition of individual liberty there. Colonial policy should be formulated according to "circumstance" not abstract rights: the Americans should have the chance of self-government and political liberty because they share the values and habits of the English. Denying them the institutions their character merits harms England as head of the empire ("Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies", in Hill, 1975). In his "Impeachment of Warren Hastings", Burke warned against damaging the character and reputation of England (in Hill, 1975). Burke's is thus an enlightened imperialism: his hope is that the principles underlying the English constitution can be applied to imperial government. He criticised the corrupt Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland and supported Irish Catholic Emancipation, but believed that responsible British rule in Ireland would best suit its people.

The nation is a key form of human community, providing common allegiance, shared values and a "moral essence". Through the nation, society becomes "a partnership..between those who are living and those who are dead and those who are yet to be born" (in Casey, 1982, p.23). Man is a social animal belonging in a number of associations or "little platoons" ranging from the family, through his local community to his nation and ultimately to mankind as a whole. But the importance of the individual's freedom is never lost in this process which is not the case with Fichte's deterministic account of the nation. The individual's character is in part framed by his socialization in the national community, but he is not exclusively dependent on the nation for his essence or moral worth. Man's allegiance is distributed among a number of associations, rather than exclusively given to the nation.



Fichte's individual owes everything to his membership of the nation, which is defined in terms of linguistic and cultural homogeneity. Burke's is a limited and humanitarian view of the nation compared with the accounts of the continental Right. As a community,

"a nation is not an idea only of local extent and individual momentary aggregation, but it is an idea of continuity which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space. And this is the choice not of one day or one set of people, not a tumultuary and giddy choice, it is a deliberate election of ages and generations. It is a constitution made by what is ten thousand times better than choice; it is made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions, tempers, dispositions and moral, civil and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time. It is a vestment which accommodates itself to the body." (Speech on Reform of Representation in the House of Commons, 1784 in Burke, 1867, p.408).

The national community brings social solidarity and a sense of belonging: it is here that man's patriotism and status as a social animal are realized. The nation as a "moral essence" is integrative, bonding together those who share the same "second nature", traditions and values. It is not defined in ethnic or racial terms, its unity and value coming instead from shared experiences and character. Patriotism is of moral worth too, providing a sense of unity, solidarity and identity: "next to the love of parents for their children..the strongest instinct both natural and moral which exists in man is the love of his country" (Speech on the Impeachment of Hastings).

The Burkean nation is not an egalitarian community. Whereas the Jacobin concept of the nation was extolled the virtues of popular sovereignty and equal citizenship, Burke's is based on "prescriptive authority" and rule by a "natural aristocracy". The "nation" was not democratic: in political terms, the nation consisted of those with landed or financial interests in the



country, but this "national class" had duties towards the rest of society. Themes of tradition, organicism and hierarchy are fused in his account of the evolution of the constitution. Legitimate claims to property and authority rest on prescriptive authority with longevity and "time out of mind" traditions of hierarchy justified according to prescription rather than abstract principle. Rights to rule or own property develop over long periods of time and become vested in a "natural aristocracy" which best understands and represents the interests of the nation as a whole. Prescription or long-lived usage of property or office brings stability and order. Through its long period in authority, the natural aristocracy also accumulates experience and a specialized knowledge of governing plus the relationship between institutions and national character. The optimal national community is a structured one where ordered liberty is promoted by clear senses of duty and allegiance. The established church plays a key role in protecting social order and cohesion, ensuring that individuality does not threaten discipline (Stafford, 1982, pp. 390/1).

Burke's political writings laid the foundations for the conservative nation and offered the first major conservative challenge to radical patriotism. The Burkean nation is a hierarchical community deriving its strength from the weight of tradition and the proximity of its ruling institutions to the national character. It is an integrative community, but not an oppressive one: the individual flourishes within the nation as he is a social animal, naturally patriotic with his character shaped in part by the national community into which he is born. The nation is not the single overriding focus of a man's loyalty, but one link in a chain of Anglican "universal benevolence" extending from the family unit to all humanity. Men

are not racially divided, but differ because of their environmentally-shaped "second nature". Burke's is a non-ethnic nation, but one based around the values and traditions of the ruling elite of the dominant English ethnic group, even though as an Irishman found difficulty in reconciling his support for the constitution with his concerns for the welfare of his native people (O'Brien, 1986). This mix of the political and cultural aspects of national identity and its reflection of the interests of the Anglo-British state and ruling groups marked the beginning of a gradual appropriation of the concept of the nation by conservatives. Burke's was a "conservative state patriotism" (Newman, 1987, p. 167) rather than a state-sponsored "official nationalism". The role of the state in promoting a conservative nationalism grew, but would not reach its zenith until the late nineteenth century when mass education, political participation and communications provided the necessary conditions for state-sponsored patriotic rhetoric.

#### The English Romantics and the "Conservative Nation".

Many of the Burkean insights into the nature of conservative state patriotism were extended by the English Romantics, Coleridge and Wordsworth. Both moved away from the radicalism of their youth to provide an early nineteenth century Romantic conservatism which emphasized the links between man and his environment (Robertson Scott, 1989). Though influenced by Burke's account of the nation, the Romantics placed greater emphasis on the pre-political basis of community.



Coleridge followed Burke in praising the organic evolution of the English constitution and relating it to the national character. In "On the Constitution of Church and State", Coleridge suggests that the national community is united through a shared "Idea", that is the psychological, historical and philosophical essence of the nation (Coleridge, 1972). As with Burke's account of national character, the "Idea" as a set of shared values and traditions gives the national community its own distinct character or personality, which is then reflected in the constitutional arrangements of that society (Calleo, 1966). The state is an organic entity evolving over time and in tune with the "Idea". Man is a social animal, finding expression in a community, with his moral development shaped by Nature and his local environment. Reason and rationality are not as important as an individual's nationality or his socialization within the local and national community. According to Coleridge, "in order to be men we must be patriots" (quoted in Calleo, 1966, p. 78).

The balance of the English constitution and its deeply-laid roots in history are admired by the older Coleridge as he stresses the conservative themes of community, authority and allegiance. The constitution balances the forces of permanence (eg the landed aristocracy) with those of progression (eg the professional and manufacturing classes). But these groups are of less significance than a National Church and "Clerisy" (largely secular rather than Christian) of educators whose task is to provide social cultivation and promote allegiance.

Wordsworth also fuses Burkean values with a Romantic account of the relations between man, community and nation. As with Coleridge, Wordsworth



focuses on the conditioning of man by his immediate environment and the traditions and values of the community in which he develops. The national community again links past, present and future generations, and is only one link in a chain of communities to which man belongs. In "The Prelude", he is critical of rationalist theories which explain the nature of the individual without reference to his environment or nationality (Wordsworth, 1971; Mendilow, 1986). In the 1850 version of "The Prelude", he praises the "genius of Burke" who:

"While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,  
Against all systems built on abstract rights,  
Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims  
Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;  
Declares the vital power of social ties  
Endeared by Custom; and with high disdain,  
Exploding upstart Theory, insists  
Upon the allegiance to which men are born."  
(Wordsworth, 1971, vol. 7, lines 503-510).

In "The Convention of Cintra", Wordsworth again proclaims the importance of nationality. "National independence and liberty, and that honour by which these and other blessings are to be preserved..are more precious than life" (quoted in White, 1953, p. 146). His love for England and the Lake District in particular is not an inward-looking nationalism, but part of a wider concern for humanity: patriotism again is the foundation for universal benevolence. Concerned by the struggles of Spain and Portugal for national independence in the face of Napoleon's armies, Wordsworth calls on the British government to aid the cause of national freedom, so reflecting her own traditions of liberty. Each nation has a vested interest in promoting the freedom of its fellow national communities.

The English Romantics promote a more humanitarian and individualistic account of nation and nationalism than is found in the German Romantic thought of Fichte or Herder. While Romantic thought has in common an emphasis on environmental conditions rather than abstract thought, the accounts of the nation outlined by Fichte in particular focuses on ethnic factors to a greater extent than do Wordsworth and Coleridge. For the Lake District poets, the national community is one founded on shared character, history and experiences, but with a stronger cultural element than is found in the Burkean nation.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the conservative concept of the nation was only one among a number of competing accounts. The liberal ideas of nationhood found in Bentham and J.S. Mill equated national independence with personal liberty, while Macaulay produced a vast Whig account of English history. In Scotland, Sir Walter Scott played a significant role in developing a distinctive Scottish Toryism. Though Palmerston recognized the political value of patriotic appeals, it was Disraeli who exploited patriotism to its full potential in developing a Conservative "national strategy". This was the era in which the conservative concept of the nation became the dominant one in British political life.

#### The Disraelian Party's "National Strategy".

In the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the conservative appropriation of the language of patriotism gathered pace as the Conservative Party under the guidance of Disraeli, Salisbury and Joseph Chamberlain developed a "national strategy". This national strategy had



several key planks:

- (i) a concerted use of appeals to patriotism and national unity, in which the Conservative Party was portrayed as the national party and contrasted with Gladstone's "anti-patriotic" Liberal party;
- (ii) a "one nation" approach aiming to neutralize class conflict and broaden Conservative support through promises of social reform;
- (iii) the portrayal of the Conservative Party as the party of empire, and the spread of imperial myths into popular culture;
- (iv) the linking of Conservatism with territorial unity and opposition to Irish Home Rule;
- (v) the further development of such symbols of conservative nationalism as the monarchy and the empire.

During this period, the conservative concept of the nation became a key weapon in the ideological and electoral armoury of the Conservative Party. Burke's conservative state patriotism was translated into an official state-based nationalism, based on the conservative concept of the nation. The Conservative Party itself, especially in government, was the prime mover in disseminating this conservative nationalism through society by a concerted promotion of popular myths and symbols. The nation was equated with conservative interests and values, and the opposition denigrated as unpatriotic. Conservatism enjoyed ideological dominance over the language of patriotism and exploited the potency of nationalist symbols and rhetoric to mobilize popular support as mass democracy emerged. In appeals to the newly-enfranchised lower classes, the Conservative Party portrayed itself as representing all classes rather than factional interests, being the party best able to implement social change through "social imperialism" and its



better understanding of the interests and traditions of the British people (McKenzie & Silver,1968).

Disraeli was a pivotal figure in the metamorphosis of the conservative nation from state patriotism into an official state nationalism. In his political writings,Disraeli adapted the Burkean themes of the conservative nation to meet the challenges of the genesis of democratic participation.As political leader,he established the Conservative Party as the party of patriotism, national unity,Empire and Union.Disraeli's earliest and most coherent political thought,dating back to his "Young England" phase, is contained in his 1835 "Vindication of the English Constitution".Here Disraeli develops the Burkean account of the nation as an organic community and contrasts this favourably with utilitarianism.The landed aristocracy are praised as the representatives of tradition and the national interest.They are the natural statesmen of society for they are in the best position to govern the country according to an understanding of the national character and its constitutional development.The aristocracy "have always taken the lead in civilization" (Disraeli,1835,p.163) and as land owners represent the permanence of Burkean prescriptive authority.English organic development and its hierarchical national community ensure stability and wise rule. Disraeli's account of English history draws on the Whig account of the underlying progress of ordered freedom and equality,but,influenced by Burke, Bolingbroke and the English Romantics,he uses it for Tory aims (Faber,1961; Mendilow,1986).

"As equality is the basis {of English society},so gradation is the superstructure,and the English nation is essentially a nation of classes but not of castes.Hence that admirable order which is characteristic of our society,for in England every man knows or finds his place." (Disraeli,1835,p.201).

Although advocating rule by the landed classes,Disraeli is concerned that the national community is not excessively divided by competing class interests.His Young England novels illustrate his fear at the development of the "two nations" of rich and poor and his support for paternalism. In "Coningsby" and then "Sybil",Disraeli argues that the traditional values of the hierarchical Constitution must be at the core of a paternalistic organic community (Vincent,1990).As early as 1835 he envisaged the Conservative Party playing this national-integrative role.

"The Tory party of this country is the national party;it is the really democratic party of England.It supports the institutions of the country because they have been established for the common good and because they secure the equality of civil rights" (Disraeli,1835,p.182).

Toryism is the "national voice" whereas liberalism and the "anti-patriotic" Whig party place sectional interest and factionalism above national unity.The Tories as the "national party of England" represent national traditions,the national character and the national church.These themes formed the crux of the Conservative Party's national strategy under Disraeli's leadership as illustrated in his famous 1872 speeches at Manchester and Crystal Palace.In these,the upholding of national institutions,the "elevation of the condition of the people" and imperialism were outlined as the party's "three great objects".Through these policies,the Conservative Party would enhance its position as the national party,gaining the support of the patriotic and deferential British people.



"The people of England, and especially the working classes of England, are proud of belonging to a great country and wish to maintain its greatness..they believe, on the whole, that the greatness and empire of England are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land" (Quoted in O'Gorman, 1986, p.147).

The Conservative Party's defence of existing institutions was framed so as to appeal to the latent patriotism of the people with social reform helping to bind the national community. The utility of social reform was judged by its integrative effects, creating "one nation" by neutralizing class conflict, rather than by reference to social justice or citizenship rights. The "elevation of the condition" of the people would ensure social stability, while its patriotic appeal would secure popular deference and continued rule by a hierarchical (but paternalist) elite. "One nation" conservatism envisaged a national community in which people were bound together by reciprocal obligations plus patriotic respect for the Constitution, the Church and the social hierarchy. The state in industrial England had to adopt some of the paternalistic duties previously bound up in the concept of "*noblesse oblige*", but beyond the rhetoric there lay little in terms of social legislation.

Paul Smith's study of the record of the Disraeli governments argues that the Conservatives offered by way of a social reform strategy. Rather than achieving a "rapprochement with the masses", the Disraelian party achieved "the assimilation of the bourgeoisie" (Smith, 1967, p.3). Behind the social reform rhetoric lay the reality of minimal practical legislation, though the extension of compulsory education certainly aided the cause of conservative state nationalism. Although the practical achievements of the Conservatives have often been overstated, the Disraelian linkage of national



well-being with minimising the damaging effects of class division continued to be seen as a core of Conservative national strategy. In the 1880s Lord Randolph Churchill picked up "Elijah's Mantle" on social reform by developing a "Tory Democracy" of imperialism, social reform and maintenance of the constitution, with which to attract support from urban areas (Quinault, 1979). Joseph Chamberlain began his career as a radical Liberal, but as a Liberal Unionist from the 1890s he identified social reform, national unity and imperial expansion with Conservative policies.

Despite the paternalistic and collectivist values of Churchill and Chamberlain, the Conservative governments of Disraeli and Salisbury tended to lean towards pragmatic free-market economics, and the party organisation had greater success in attracting the support of the urban bourgeoisie than the working class or trade unionists (Cornford, 1963/4). The most significant aspect of the Disraelian "one nation" legacy was its appeal to national unity and the use of nationalist or imperialist propaganda (often linked with social reform) to attract support and disguise class conflict. The transformation of the conservative nation into a Conservative Party national strategy reflected important social developments: the growth of democracy with its associated need for the party to attract and mobilize support; and the expansion in social communications which meant that official state nationalism could be an effective tool in the hands of the conservative state.

The association of the Conservative Party with imperialism was another Disraelian achievement, developed further by Joseph Chamberlain. Disraeli had followed Palmerston's lead in portraying foreign policy in terms of national

interest and pride in imperial achievements, but tied it to the other planks of the conservative national strategy. The intense jingoism and propaganda surrounding imperial expansion enhanced the image of the Conservatives as the upholders of patriotism and unity, and helped spread the appeal of the conservative nation. Jingoism spread among the lower middle-classes as a reaction to the disintegration of traditional values and social structures (Price, 1977). New systems of mass communication such as the popular press, the music halls and later the cinemas acted as agents for the spread of imperialism into the popular psyche (MacKenzie, 1985). The image of the Conservatives as the national and imperial party was reinforced by attacks on Gladstone's reluctance towards imperial expansion, and later his support for Irish Home Rule. Although primarily remembered for their espousal of "one nation" conservatism, a large part of Disraeli's 1872 speeches were taken up by attacks on Liberal policy towards the empire as divisive and not in the national interest. Party propaganda was widely used in the battle for electoral support, with patriotic appeals at the heart of the Conservative mobilization of the lower middle-classes.

"The central argument which appears in the popular party literature is that the Conservatives are uniquely qualified to govern Britain and that the institutions of the country are safe in their hands alone. Because of their understanding of the nation and its history, their devotion to the interests of the whole community, and their inherently superior governmental skills, they alone are qualified to rule" (McKenzie & Silver, 1968, pp. 72-3).

The growth of imperialist rhetoric and jingoism was related to the increased popularity of Social Darwinism and racial accounts of politics (Bolt, 1984; Baumgart, 1982). Disraeli believed that "race was everything", and the "key to history", with the Saxon and Jewish races notable for their



strength and purity. Chamberlain saw imperialist expansion as a national mission for the British race ("the greatest governing race the world has ever seen") to spread "civilization" and overcome "barbarism" (Bennett, 1962).<sup>2</sup> Racial theories were commonplace in much late Victorian thought, often being expressed in the crude pseudo-scientific language of Social Darwinism and in xenophobia aimed at Irish inhabitants in Britain and "uncivilized" ethnic groups in the Empire. Ideas of the superiority of the British race and its moral mission to "civilize" other races were widespread in this popular culture of imperialism and militarism. Many Liberal and Conservative supporters of Empire wrote in terms of national mission or the expansion of the British nation: Dilkes and Seeley spoke of the self-governing colonies as part of a "Greater Britain" united by race, language and law. In the 1870s, imperialism involved the desire to strengthen bonds between Anglo-Saxon settlers and the mother country, and ideas of a civilizing mission (Koerner & Schmidt, 1964). But universalizing themes of racial unity or mission were a diversion from the particularism of the conservative nation (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, pp. 59-61). Expansionist imperialism marked a move away from the parochial Burkean nation (and its enlightened imperialism) towards a more ideological brand of nationalist politics.

Disraeli saw imperial expansion as a means of increasing British power and spreading British governing skills, but Chamberlain played the pivotal role in developing a popular Conservative imperialism. He equated imperial expansion with social reform, claiming that "social imperialism" would see the increased wealth Britain gained from her colonies being used to improve



the condition of the people. Colonial outlets would provide new markets to maintain economic stability and Britain's strong trading position, though in reality the myths of imperial glory only served to mask Britain's long-term decline from world-power status. Chamberlain also looked to a federal union of Britain and her self-governing colonies and regarded the new imperialism in Africa in terms of a civilizing mission (Kipling's "White Man's Burden").<sup>3</sup>

Imperial propaganda was widespread in the popular culture of the day, but in the longer term imperialism posed problems for both the British state and the Conservative's national strategy. The conservative nation was both enhanced and threatened by imperialism. Initially imperial propaganda helped the spread of conservative nationalism in Britain, but attempts to find a wider imperial or racial identity incorporating Britain and her colonies were unsuccessful and undermined the conservative nation. Chamberlain's advocacy of imperial preference and tariff reform dominated politics in the Edwardian era and divided the Conservative Party. He equated tariff reform with imperial solidarity, social reform and commercial expansion, but the policy was economically dubious and electorally unpopular (opponents dubbed the Conservatives the party of "dear food") (Green, 1985).

As I have noted, the late Victorian era was one in which conservative nationalism was popularized and mobilized by a concerted use of myths and symbols, one of the most significant of which was the monarchy. The monarchy had been long recognized as a symbol of national unity during times of crisis, but was not the central plank of official state nationalism (Cannadine, 1986). Hobsbawm's "invented tradition" thesis notes the way in

which emerging democracies dramatized the national community by reviving civic rituals as expressions of official state nationalism (Hobsbawm & Ranger,1983). Significant invented traditions, myths or symbols of British conservative state nationalism included imperial propaganda,myths about the Anglo-Saxon race (Melman,1991),the creation of national symbols such as Britannia or John Bull,and the celebration of the nation in music and literature.Invented traditions symbolized social cohesion and membership of the national community,legitimized the conservative state and were used to mobilize support for the conservative nation (Hobsbawm & Ranger,1983,p.7).

The ritualization and commercialization of the monarchy began in earnest with the popular ceremonials which marked Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilee's of 1887 and 1897.The monarchy became a symbol of the ancient constitution and of national cohesion at a time when republicanism was threatening to undermine it.<sup>4</sup> The empire and the monarchy (linked with the crowning of Victoria as Empress of India) passed into popular culture, promoting lower class patriotism in defence of the constitution and the conservative nation.Pugh has noted the role of the Primrose League in mobilizing the monarchy (and the Church of England) as a symbol of the conservative nation,thereby achieving the desired effect of increasing working class support for conservative values (Pugh,1985).Tom Nairn argues that the monarchy provides the United Kingdom with a surrogate national identity that offers a sense of community without mass participation (Nairn,1988,a; Arblaster,1989). However,it is my contention that the popularization of the monarchy was only one element in the creation of a conservative state nationalism in the late 19th century.National identity had been politicized in the course of the earlier development of radical and



conservative concepts of the nation, and was appropriated by the conservative state at this time of social upheaval. Disguising conflicting class interests and mobilizing the lower classes behind popular expressions of conservative state nationalism allowed the Conservative Party and the ruling elites to maintain the existing social structures and successfully adapt to mass politics. Though the monarchy was an important mobilizing agent, it was never wholly politicized or identified with the Conservative Party.

The Conservative Party's national strategy in the late nineteenth century was directed towards territorial unity as well as social unity. This concern for the territorial integrity of the nation-state was most notable in Conservative support for the Union with Ireland, especially when contrasted with Gladstone's attempts to bring about Irish Home Rule. Imperialism benefitted the Conservative's national strategy in electoral terms, but the greatest benefit arising from opposition to Irish Home Rule was in the sphere of "high politics". Chamberlain and Hartington led a breakaway from Gladstone's Liberal Party after his 1886 Home Rule Bill, with their Liberal Unionist MPs being firmly allied with the Conservative Party after the 1893 Home Rule Bill (Fair, 1986). Fair claims that the Irish Question was the dominant factor in the flight of the Liberal Unionists, analysing the voting behaviour of MPs to show that policy differences between Liberal Unionists and Conservatives existed in other areas. Chamberlain claimed that the Conservatives offered the best chances of social reform and imperial expansion, but his tariff reform campaign divided the party in the Edwardian era.



Chamberlain, Churchill and Salisbury linked conservatism with Unionism, but it was the political theorist Albert Dicey who offered the clearest defence of the Union (Dicey, 1973; Ford, 1985). Dicey rejected federalism as alien to the British constitution and attacked the nationalists' claim that Ireland was ready to become a self-governing nation. He supported Chamberlain's "constructive Unionism", arguing that only the Union could maintain justice, freedom and state authority. The party's commitment to the Union proved electorally advantageous in Protestant working-class areas where the links between Orangeism and Conservative voting lasted into the second half of the 20th century. However, Unionism was not as effective a plank of conservative nationalism as imperialism and did not have the same impact on popular opinion. The Unionist territorial settlement afforded the conservative state a sufficient level of autonomy to manage "high politics", but territorial integration was incomplete (Bulpitt, 1983). The centre's willingness to grant peripheral areas a large measure of governmental and cultural autonomy maintained the state's ethnic balancing act, ensuring that Unionism was not merely an extension of English identity and interests. Long-held national identities lived alongside Unionist culture, preventing the latter from becoming the sole mode of identity.

#### Decline and Depoliticization: The Early Twentieth Century.

In the Edwardian era the Conservative's "national strategy" of one nation politics and nationalist rhetoric began to run into trouble as nationalist appeals divided the party and lost popularity. Conservative nationalism had begun as a collection of general, populist values such as

empire or national unity, but gradually became identified with specific (and often unpopular) policies (Cunningham, 1986). Conservative imperialism lost its mobilizing character after the Boer War and was riven by internal division during Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign. Though Chamberlain had claimed that the Conservatives were committed to social reform, the Edwardian era saw the party defending privilege and opposing constitution reform and welfare measures. Conservative support for the Union remained strong, but was not a major mobilizing force.

Another factor in the decline of the Conservative's national strategy was the emergence of a Radical Right which used an extreme and divisive form of nationalist rhetoric. Only with Baldwin's patriotism, based on nostalgia for rural England and a desire for national unity, did the moderate Right regain its grip on patriotic discourse. The Edwardian Radical Right was not a united ideological grouping, but the most significant in nationalist terms were the "Diehards" (eg Lord Willoughby de Broke) and Lord Milner's social imperialists (Sykes, 1983; Searle, 1981). Willoughby de Broke fused together a number of themes in a pragmatic "nationalist strategy" akin to that of the continental Right. He was critical of the rich for failing to perform the social duties demanded by "*noblesse oblige*", yet opposed the Parliament Bill despite a Unionist whip (Phillips, 1980). Other themes included "national efficiency", social imperialism and tariff reform, "race regeneration" and strong Unionism. The Radical Right faction sought to restore a populist-nationalist ideology with which to attract the votes of the masses, but it made little headway in the Conservative Party. Its "nationalist strategy" however showed the ability of the Right to seize the nationalist mantle and damage the image and integrity of the moderate

"conservative nation".The nationalism of the Edwardian Right was also expressed in popular Leagues which built on mass patriotism and lobbied for nationalist policies.Among the most significant were the Tariff Reform League,with which Chamberlain was closely associated,and the Navy League which lobbied for social cohesion,a strong navy and "splendid isolation" in foreign policy (Summers,1981).The Primrose League had been an important player in the spread of conservative nationalism and the "invention" of the conservative monarchy,but its mobilizing impetus had begun to wane by the late Edwardian era (Pugh,1985).

The Conservative Party did not form a majority government until the early 1920s, divided by the issue of tariff reform for much of the period. The First World War restored the party's belief in itself as the party of nation and patriotism,but it could no longer convincingly present its Liberal or socialist opponents as "anti-patriotic".With the decline of the Liberals,the Conservatives re-emerged as the party of government.As leader, Baldwin re-established its credentials as the party of national unity and social reform rather than class interests, but still struggled with the tariff reform issue.Baldwin's patriotism was that of the English country gentleman,evoking images of a "golden age" of rural life and idealizing the English character (Baldwin,1937,1938 & 1939).This marked a return to an essentially English parochial conservative nation,moving away from imperial mission and nationalist ideology.Baldwin depoliticized the conservative nation,cleansing it of racist and aggressively nationalist elements,making a clearer distinction between moderate conservatism and the nationalist Right. The Baldwinite concept of the nation stressed themes of national unity,a settled polity and latent patriotism (Schwarz,1986).This reflected a general



trend towards studies of national character (eg by Sir Ernest Barker) and themes of rural England and local patriotisms.<sup>5</sup> Baldwin waxed lyrical about the English countryside and his memories of rural Worcestershire.

"When I ask myself what I mean by England..England comes to me through my various senses - through the ears,through the eye,and through certain imperishable scents..The sources of England,the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy,the corncrake on a dewy morning,the sound of the scythe against the whetstone,and the sight of a plough team coming over the brown of a hill,the sight that has been England long after the Empire has perished and every worker in England has ceased to fuction,for centuries the one eternal sight of England." ("On England",1924; in Baldwin,1936,p.20).

Baldwin's idea of the nation was a return to the traditional English ordered community,relegating the now unpopular or defunct themes of Unionism and imperialism.The establishment of the Irish Free State altered the character of the Conservative's national strategy: many of the unpopular elements of Unionism had been purged,and Baldwin's patriotism was essentially English,building on traditional identities rather than politically manufactured ones.Scottish conservatism however retained its distinctive features and the Conservative commitment to Ulster ensured support in Orange areas.Although it was primarily insular, Baldwin's conservative patriotism retained a romantic attachment to empire,but allowed greater self-government including the 1935 Government of India Act.The gradual move away from imperial government was criticized by some Conservatives such as Leo Amery,for whom Empire was the embodiment of the principles of British political evolution.

"The Empire is the embodiment of a tradition of political life in which all are free to co-operate..The British Empire is not merely an adequate field for economic development,or a sound and economical system of mutual security.It is a partnership in memories,in sentiment,in outlook,

in ideals. It is, above all, a living personal thing, a mighty soul housed in no mean outward framework." (L. Amery, 1935, pp. 174-5).

The retreat from Empire after 1945 left the conservative nation floundering. Many Conservatives continued to support British colonial and overseas commitments, but the Commonwealth failed to become an effective means of ensuring a British world role. The end of Empire and Britain's declining political and economic status contributed to a mood of national self-doubt in which patriotism was shunned. The conservative concept of the nation suffered accordingly until Powell sought to redefine the nation and restore a positive sense of national identity, free from the corrosive myths of the past.

#### Summary and Conclusion.

In this chapter I have examined the emergence of the conservative concept of the nation as the dominant one in British politics, and the benefits the Conservative Party derived from this. England had developed as a centralized nation-state in the early modern period, while national consciousness was evident among the ruling groups well before the French Revolution ushered in a period of nationalist politics. There was no mass nationalist movement in England; instead nationalism was appropriated by conservative forces, first by Burke's doctrine of conservative patriotism and then by the development of an official state nationalism in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The doctrinal basis of the Burkean nation, focusing on the organic constitution, its links with the national character and the importance of the national community, has remained the leading

model of conservative state patriotism. This Burkean nation was seized upon by the governing classes and transformed into a populist nationalism by Disraeli and Chamberlain. The Conservative national strategy which they developed had two central expressions: (i) the translation of the conservative nation into a Conservative Party programme of national unity, social reform, imperialism and Unionism; and (ii) the spread of conservative state nationalism into popular culture, often by the Conservative Party and its popular Leagues, through myths of empire, race and monarchy, and the use of jingoism for party political purposes.

This national strategy was highly successful in mobilizing patriotic support behind the Conservative Party, and in popularizing the conservative constitution. Radical accounts of the nation were neutralized by the extensive penetration of conservative nationalism into popular culture and by the identification of patriotic values with the Conservative Party. However, cracks began to emerge in the Conservative's national strategy in the Edwardian era as the popularity of imperialism and Unionism waned and rival views on empire emerged within the party. The nationalist Right took many of the values of the conservative nation to extremes, threatening to undermine the integrity of the patriotism of the moderate Right. Baldwin's rural nostalgia restored much of the integrity of the conservative nation, and echoed the Disraelian aim of neutralizing class conflict through a politics of social harmony and cohesion. By the end of the Second World War though, the Conservative's national strategy had been severely weakened. The gradual retreat from empire, Britain's decline as a world power, and the emergence of a collectivist consensus all hindered the development of a new conservative concept of the nation. In subsequent chapters on Powellism and



Thatcherism, I will look at more recent attempts at reviving a national strategy, commenting in particular on the modern dichotomy between "one nation" and "nationalist" strategies. The next chapter though looks at the concept of the nation in the thought of the New Right.

#### Footnotes.

1. Miller notes a common defence of the post-1688 Establishment in the thought of Hume, Smith and Burke. He argues that only Burke can truly be deemed a conservative (in the ideological sense) because only he lived long enough to react to the ideological issues raised by the French Revolution. See David Miller: *Philosophy and Ideology in Hume's Political Thought*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981.
2. See Wolfgang Mock: "The Function of 'Race' in Imperialist Ideologies: The Example of Joseph Chamberlain" in Paul Kennedy & Anthony Nicholls (eds): *Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*. Macmillan, London, 1981. pp. 190-203.
3. On the history of the British Empire see Bernard Potter: *A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983*. 2nd edition, Longman, London, 1984. T.O. Lloyd: *The British Empire, 1558-1983*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984.
4. The monarchy had been a symbol of nationhood for the Establishment in Elizabethan and Georgian times, but was dynastic in character and often directly involved in politics through Court parties. Only in the Victorian era was the monarchy popularized and effectively depoliticized.
5. On early 20th century patriotism see Robert Colls & Philip Dodd (eds): *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920*. Croom Helm, London, 1986.

### CHAPTER THREE: INDIVIDUAL AND NATION: THE NEW RIGHT.

Theories of nation and nationalism in British politics had long been the property of the moderate right, exemplified in the Conservative Party's status as the "national party", when both conservatism and the viability of the nation-state were forcibly challenged in the post-war world. The Keynesian Welfare State consensus produced a shift in conservative politics away from individualism and laissez-faire towards a collectivist and interventionist approach. Macmillan's "Middle Way" (Macmillan, 1938) and Butler's "new conservatism" had replaced the laissez-faire and anti-statist approaches of Sir Ernest Benn and Lord Hugh Cecil (Benn, 1953; Cecil, 1912). However, the post-war consensus and the "new conservatism" of state intervention were challenged by a revival of classical liberalism, tempered by conservative traditionalism, most notably in the writings of Friedrich Hayek. By the 1970s this "New Right" trend in political theory began to manifest itself in the Conservative Party, initially through Enoch Powell, then through the monetarist economics of Sir Keith Joseph.'

The New Right is not though a homogeneous body of political opinion. There are commonly acknowledged to be two clear bodies within the New Right. The first is made up of economic liberals concerned to promote the virtues of the free-market, individual liberty, a negative concept of freedom and a greatly reduced role for the state. The second group is less cohesive, but tends to stress the authority of the state, the importance of traditional institutions and morality, and the cultural and national identities which shape the individual. The libertarian wing of the New Right has an individualist methodology, while the authoritarian wing has at its core a

belief in the importance of culture and communal identity. In this section of the thesis I will examine how both wings have contributed to a renewed interest in national identity (often culturally or racially defined). The libertarians acted as its thesis, the authoritarians its antithesis, to produce a synthesis of economic liberalism and strong state nationalism as seen in the thought of Powell and, less cohesively, in the politics of Thatcherism.

Libertarians such as Nozick have only peripheral relevance for the study of contemporary conservatism. Their wholesale rejection of a role for the state beyond maintaining the conditions necessary for individual liberty and the workings of the capitalist market economy is clearly contrary to the conservative values of authority, tradition and allegiance. Libertarianism is instead a radical restatement of classical liberalism.<sup>2</sup> Nozick's individualism is a restatement of Lockean principles of individual rights, property and the minimal or "night-watchman state" which emerges from competing "mutual protection agencies" (Nozick, 1974). For libertarians, political order is only justifiable if it is beneficial to individual freedom. Nozick's theory lacks any concept of community, citizenship or identity: group membership is voluntary, and the individual rather than the group is the basic unit of analysis.

Of more immediate interest to the study of the New Right and contemporary British conservatism is the work of Samuel Brittan, a neo-liberal economics thought is supplemented by his "two cheers" for utilitarian theory. Brittan's support for the market economy derives from this mixed neo-liberal/utilitarian standpoint but also takes a libertarian



attitude towards morality which conservatives associate with the "permissive society" (Brittan,1988).Brittan has called for liberalization of economic life in a largely unbridled system of competitive capitalism, and an extension of personal liberty.Competitive capitalism and the "permissive society" are two sides of the same coin,as the consumer society and enhanced personal freedom will inevitably break down traditional class and hierarchical barriers.Capitalism for Brittan is undermined by the corporate institutions and traditional social structures with which it has been forced to operate.

Brittan promotes a "corrected market economy",with the profit motive and self-interest as its guiding values,but working in a framework of rules to provide an optimal market environment and meet individual needs where the market has proved inefficient (Brittan 1988).His is a theory drawing on liberal utilitarianism and a Rawlsian-type system of contractarian rights (Brittan,1983).The utilitarian method of judging actions by their effects on individuals and their welfare is welcomed,but he believes this must be tempered by a system of rights and constitutionalism.He shares the Hayekian opposition to the dangers of "unlimited democracy" produced by the excessive demands of interest groups and bureaucracy (Brittan,1975,1977 & 1983).Of traditional conservative concepts of society and tradition, Brittan notes:

"Once the traditional consensus broke down,and human expectations were increased,the concept of society as an organism with its own demands became a recipe for unlimited political intervention and for interminable strife." (Brittan,1988,p.105).

The concept of society is associated with the nationalist Right of which he is highly critical. Brittan's distaste for nationalism is clearly seen in his critique of the Thatcher government's handling of the 1982 Falklands conflict. From a utilitarian analysis, war is unjustifiable even if through fighting a possible future benefit may be realized. However,

"It was obvious to the world that the motives of most of the British public in supporting the war had nothing to do with safeguarding international law; the struggle was a symbolic one over hurt national pride." (Brittan, 1983, p. 47)

As with the concept of society, the idea of the nation is a dangerous one, threatening individual liberty and autonomy. Brittan has also been critical of the way in which the debate on European economic and monetary union has degenerated into the rhetoric of national sovereignty. The real focus should not be on such fictions or abstractions as nationhood, but on individual freedom.

"It would be useful to translate all political demands into statements about individual human beings.. statements about governments, states or nations should be translated into statements relating to individuals, who alone can feel, suffer or die." (Brittan, 1983, p. 20).

For the economic liberals the voluntary actions of individuals are the only true basis of group action or community. Community or nation has no prior claim on the allegiance of the individual. Nations then are to be seen as composed of individuals rather than as an organic whole. Individuals must be seen as the best judges of their own interests and policies must be tailored to satisfy their needs. Liberalism is restored as an essentially individualist ethos whereas the dominant strand in conservative thought has seen individuals taking their place in a whole which is greater than the



sum of its members. Hayek's thought contains the individualist methodology of the economic liberals, but also a conservative stress on evolution and tradition, though again without a true theory of community.

#### Hayek's conservatism.

The postscript to Hayek's "The Constitution of Liberty" is a critique of conservatism, outlining why Hayek himself rejected claims that he was a conservative (Hayek, 1960). However, in this section I will argue that Hayek's thought contains important conservative themes, notably his emphasis on tradition and the evolution of the rules of social order, but is critical of the hierarchical community of ordered liberty which makes up the conservative concept of the nation. Hayek's account is of a "political nation" in which individuals find expression for their social character through the shared political traditions and interests of a market economy.

Hayek defines conservatism largely in terms of its opposition to liberalism and progress, claiming that conservatism offers only resistance to undesirable developments and a defence of existing institutions rather than an alternative set of ideas. Conservatism is based on opportunism, nostalgia and a fear of change, is complacent towards authority and unable to comprehend the logic of market forces, leaning towards protectionism. The conservative reverence of authority, hierarchy and its tendency towards collectivism are compared unfavourably with the individualist and progressive ethos of liberalism. The conservative is intellectually weak because of his distrust of new knowledge and lack of a body of political



principles. This weakness in the battle of ideas is further revealed by conservatism's proneness to nationalism.

"Connected with the conservative distrust of the new and the strange is its hostility to internationalism and its proneness to a strident nationalism. The ideas which are changing our civilization respect no national boundaries. It is this nationalistic bias which frequently provides the bridge from conservatism to collectivism: to think in terms of 'our' industry or resource is only a short step away from demanding that these national assets be directed in the national interest." (Hayek, 1960, p. 405).

Hayek's opposition to nationalism and economic protectionism are clearly seen in the international nature of his Great Society (Hayek, 1982, vol. 3). The workings of the market economy occur on a worldwide scale and should not be distorted by nationalistic policies of protection or misplaced feelings of communal solidarity. Nationalism and collectivism, like feelings of communal solidarity, are "primitive" or "tribal" feelings, inappropriate to the international and impersonal market economy of his ideal Great Society. Hayek talks of the clash between loyalty to the tribal group and the commitment to universal justice, arguing that the latter must win out in a free society where the most important groups are small, voluntary associations (Hayek, 1982, vol. 2, pp. 147-152). The free society should renounce the tendency for communal groupings to seek the common good. Protectionist and collectivist policies threaten the freedom of the individual, which is the guiding ethos of his Great Society, and undermine the economic benefits of the catallaxy (market economy). But society still suffers from its subdivision into smaller groups based on tribal habits and primitive desires for communal solidarity and face-to-face relations (Forsyth, p. 246).

"While I look forward,as an ultimate ideal,to a state of affairs in which national boundaries have ceased to be obstacles to the free movement of men,I believe that within any period with which we can now be concerned,any attempt to realize it would lead to a revival of strong nationalist sentiments and a retreat from positions already achieved.However far modern man accepts in principle the ideal that the same rules should apply to all men,in fact he does concede it only to those whom he regards as similar to himself,and only slowly learns to extend the range of those he does accept as his own." (Hayek,1982,vol 2, p.58).

Hayek's evolutionary process through which unfavourable ideas and practices are rejected has not yet been able to overcome "primitive" feelings of community.The individualist ethos of the Great Society,under which the individual is an autonomous economic unit guided by the rules and traditions of that society, is also undermined by democratically-elected governments pursuing collective welfare.The functions of the state are wider than those of Nozick's minimal state,with Hayek's concern being that government intervention is not directed towards achieving specific goals or benefiting identifiable individuals (Barry,1979).One area of state involvement which Hayek regards as necessary,despite his criticism of "tribal" instincts of communal identity,is control over immigration.

"To confine to the citizens of particular countries provisions for a minimum standard higher than that universally applied makes it a privilege and necessitates certain limitations on the free movement of men across frontiers..Such restrictions apper unavoidable so long as certain differences in national or ethnic traditions (especially differences in the rate of propagation) exist." (Hayek,1982,vol 3, p.56).

Hayek's view of man and the evolution of the rules of society are similar to the accounts offered by conservatism.Man is not a self-determining being using his reason to organize society in terms of abstract or artificial principles,but is a natural being or biological organism working within a system of rules and traditions (Hayek,1982,vol.2, pp.35-54



& 1960, pp.54-70). Culture and society are not rationally created entities but emerge through a process of "cultural evolution" in which the rules most beneficial to the free society become established as traditions. Reason appears through the tacit knowledge by which man comes to recognize and understand social organization:

"The mind is embedded in a traditional impersonal structure of learnt rules, and its capacity to order experience is an acquired replica of cultural patterns which every individual mind finds given. The brain is an organ enabling us to absorb, but not to design culture." (Hayek, 1982, vol 3, p157).

This distrust of man's capacity to artificially create the rules and institutions of social organization echoes the model of human nature found in conservative thought. Hayek's account of the evolution of society also has significant similarities with conservative accounts of the organic rather than mechanical creation of society. Society is a growth, evolving over time and mirroring the evolutionary processes of nature in that the optimal customs and institutions survive to become the rules of the Great Society. This cultural evolution is a selection and rejection process in which the rules best suited to the free society and individual development emerge. Rules and traditions are spontaneously formed, the unintended consequences of man's interactions. The "spontaneous order" emerges from man's adherence to the rules of conduct which ensure his survival and progress. Man is incapable of rationally creating society, only becoming aware of his position through social rules. Man emerges from the initial primitive and tribal stages of the evolutionary process into the urban and commercial environment of the Great Society in which individuals seek progress and the maximization of their wealth and autonomy. Crowley argues that primitive



and tribal societies are doomed in Hayek's Great Society because its emphasis on collective goals is incompatible with the desire of individuals to follow their own life-plans (Crowley,1987).Freedom is the goal of man,and the root of civilization,but individual liberty is best expressed in an ordered society.

Hayek's evolutionary account of the development of society fuses the role of man as a purposive individual,seeking autonomy and wealth,with a social order which structures the interactions between individuals (Rowland, 1987,p.38).Individual actions are comprehensible because of recognized rules and traditions.Traditions and social institutions are "knowledge-bearers", acting as the necessary conditions for man to become a purposive being (Hayek,1960,pp.54-70).This emphasis on the importance of traditions as unplanned guides to social action,being embedded in successful rules,again fuses a liberal emphasis on freedom with conservative values.

"He has produced a defence of liberty which reconciles the modern sense of individuality with the claims of tradition.Hayek shows that we are to rely primarily on inherited traditions of thought and conduct in all our dealings with each other." (J.Gray,1988,p.256).

This valuing of tradition implies that any change based on abstract reasoning is dangerous,and rests uneasily with his criticism that conservatism places too much value on existing institutions at the expense of progress.In his "Individualism and the Economic Order",Hayek notes that:

"the fundamental attitude of true individualism is one of humility toward the process by which mankind has achieved things which have not been designed or understood by any individual and are indeed greater than human minds." (Hayek,1948,p.24).

Although Hayek's account incorporates conservative values of tradition and anti-rationalism, his political thought lacks the extensive notion of community found in conservative doctrine. Hayek's Great Society is not a community in the sense that tribal societies were: here is no common idea of collective good or communal solidarity. The whole is not greater than the sum of its parts, so society never transcends its individual members. These types of tribal society are a throwback to a type of social organization rejected by the evolution of freedom. Indeed Hayek cares little for the nation as a community and explicitly rejects nationalist economics. There is little mention of patriotic allegiance or the national basis of traditions and culture, though he accepts that the Great Society is an ideal and that nation-states are likely to survive in the medium-term. Hayek's theory of society is then a minimalist account of the "political nation": the most individuals living in any one territory need to have in common is allegiance to the same set of traditions and rules of conduct which flow over time. Ideally, the Great Society should nullify national boundaries, but Hayek recognizes the present day attachment to the nation-state and the need for immigration controls. Hayek's idea of community is a limited one: society is a collection of strangers meeting in the marketplace to make mutually beneficial exchanges, linked only by their allegiance to shared rules. Tribal loyalties threaten individual autonomy and the smooth functioning of the market: individuals may share allegiance to social rules, but diversity is vital.

"The moral superiority of the Great Society lies in its anonymity, the distance it requires all men to establish between themselves and others, which in turn allows men, in their pursuit of their own private and arbitrary goods, to provide goods to anonymous purchasers, guided in what to produce only by the impersonal price mechanism and not by any form of coercion." (Crowley, p.235).

In claiming that he is not a conservative, Hayek recognizes that he does not fit into the category of classical liberal either, instead calling himself an "Old Whig", a title he also accords to Edmund Burke (Hayek, 1960). I have already noted the similarities between Burkean values and the Hayekian themes of man as a social animal, the development of society through the evolution of rules, plus his stress on traditions as governing the arena of social relations. Rowland detects a Burkean influence in Hayek's limited account of the basis of community in legal and political traditions (Rowland, 1987, pp.103-128). However, it is my contention that whereas Burke offered the paradigmatic account of the conservative nation, Hayek presents an account of a "political nation", a subcategory of the conservative nation which is critical of the values of community present in the former. Hayek's limited sense of community includes none of the Burkean emphasis on national character and its relation to the institutions or political culture of a society (which links nation or civil society with the state). The political account of the nation as presented by Hayek lacks a sense of the importance of the nation as a community bringing together individuals through feelings of communal solidarity and patriotic attachment to the institutions and traditions of the nation-state.



### Oakeshott and the "Political Nation".

The political thought of Michael Oakeshott is similar to that of Hayek in its liberal-conservative emphasis on the legal and political basis of social relations.<sup>3</sup> In both, the idea of community is limited to those human relations governed by constitutionalism and traditional rules of association. However, while Hayek seems to deny the national basis of society and traditions, looking forward to an internationalist Great Society, Oakeshott looks to the British case as the optimal example of a political community. Oakeshott believes that patriotism is a conservative virtue, showing a greater awareness of the national character of traditions and institutions than Hayek. In "On Being Conservative", Oakeshott describes conservatism as a preference for the familiar and an aversion to fundamental change (Oakeshott, 1962, pp. 168-196). The conservative values man's identity as a member of a national community and fears any change which will radically undermine this identity.

The conservative regards politics as a limited activity and opposes rationalist or ideological projects to govern society according to end-state goals. The British constitution illustrates this limited politics for the rule of law, with its emphasis on individual freedom and balanced government, is the basis of British political tradition. A society developed along these lines is a "civil association", organized on "moral" practices of allegiance to authoritative, traditional rules. Legalistic "modes of association" are those based on the recognized authority of, and obedience to, known, non-instrumental rules. His focus is on the authenticity of the authoritative

legal body ("lex"), rather than on the justice ("jus") of its pronouncements (Oakeshott,1983).This civil association compares favourably with "entreprise association" which is founded on the pursuit of the "common interest" and so extends the scope of the political, threatening limited government and individual freedom.

"The rule of law bakes no bread,it is unable to distribute loaves and fishes (it has none),and it cannot protect itself against external assault,but it remains the most civilized and least burdensome conception of state yet to be devised." (Oakeshott,1983,p.164).

Again we have an account of society drawing on the liberal-conservative theme of the traditional authority of government by established legal rules. The idea of ordered liberty fuses the conservative attachment to tradition and authority with the liberal values of individual freedom and limited government.Community is limited to common membership of the legal-political association and a shared acceptance of the authority of traditional rules and institutions.Civil association rests on impersonal law and legal citizenship,not on "rationalist" projects such as pursuit of the common good or transcendental community. Government should be a limited activity not one based on "rationalist" goals: socialism, nationalism and communitarian values are alien to the British political traditions of ordered liberty and pluralism.In examining the development of modern European states, Oakeshott again distinguishes between civil association ("societas") and enterprise association ("universitas") (Oakeshott,1975).The "universitas" is a corporate mode in which the state seeks to bond people in a common purpose such as the creation of national solidarity or an exclusivist nation (a "*solidarite commune*").The alternative model of state development, "societas",is based on a plurality of groups all recognizing constitutional authority.



Oakeshott's commitment to British institutions means that his idea of political association is one linked to the national through his belief in the virtue of patriotism as an expression of allegiance and respect for tradition. To a greater extent than in Hayek's thought, Oakeshott accepts the existence of the nation-state as the social arena in which traditions develop meaning and content. Again though this "political nation" is only a sub-category of the "conservative nation" as it lacks the emphasis on the nation as a community in which man's social character is expressed and in which his relations with his fellow man gain content through shared identity and values. A conservative critic for "The Salisbury Review" thus noted that:

"In Oakeshott, generally speaking, social life seems too scattered and diffuse a thing to compel much positive allegiance. It is merely a congeries of private or group activities without any common focus. That is, it is not a culture, a nation or a state, but simply an amorphous, fissiparous 'freedom', a form without a content." (Grant, 1988, p. 283).

For Oakeshott, quests for community as a basis of fraternal relations, social solidarity and shared ends are "rationalist" projects. Nationalist attempts to build up the nation as something more than the sphere in which individualism and traditions of limited government develop illustrate the dangers of rationalism. The nation is not valued as the dominant community but as one grouping among many in a pluralist society. Rein Staal is critical of Oakeshott for divorcing conservatism from its belief in political association as a form of community (Staal, 1987). But the liberal-conservative "political nation" regards communal solidarity as a threat to individual liberty. This limited, legalistic account of political association found in Hayek and Oakeshott moves away from the Burkean concept of the



conservative nation by incorporating a liberal individualist ethos at the expense on the conservative stress on the social and pre-political.<sup>4</sup> The authoritarian branch of New Right thought tries to redress this by focusing on the cultural or pre-political roots of association, but again goes beyond the boundaries of the moderate conservative account of the nation (Covell, 1986; Rayner, 1986). While liberal-conservatives tend to emphasize individual autonomy at the expense of its cultural or social content, cultural conservatives stress the organic and cultural character of the national community at the expense of individual freedom and diversity.

#### Scruton and the "Cultural Nation".

The major figure in the emergence of this authoritarian and cultural conservatism on the New Right is Roger Scruton. His major political work "The Meaning of Conservatism" is a statement of conservative thought which emphasizes traditional themes of authority, organicism plus community, and attacks the individualist ethos of liberal-conservatism (Scruton, 1984). Scruton has also been influential as editor of "The Salisbury Review", the leading intellectual journal of cultural conservatism, whose contributors have included John Casey, Enoch Powell and Ray Honeyford. His importance for this study rests on his espousal of a cultural account of the nation in which man's social identity is expressed through his membership of a cultural community rather than through his citizenship (ie membership of a political association).

Scruton's political thought echoes many familiar conservative themes, but seeks to divorce these from the liberal emphasis on individual freedom and

plural society,giving his conservatism its authoritarian flavour (Scruton, 1984 & 1988). Individual freedom is only of value when tied to established traditions and allegiances,not as an abstract concept.While liberals relate individual freedom to interests or autonomy,conservatives locate it in the social institutions which foster it.In comparing liberalism and conservatism,Scruton asserts that liberalism adopts a "first-person perspective" in which the sovereignty of the individual serves as the basis of political order and the just society.In contrast,conservatism adopts a "third person perspective" in which people are seen as social animals, immersed in the shared culture of the community (Scruton,1984,p.195). Freedom for Scruton's conservatism can only be understood in the context of authority and social unity.

"Freedom is comprehensible as a social goal only when subordinate to something else,to an organization or arrangement which defines the individual aim..One major difference between liberalism and conservatism consists,therefore, in the fact that,for the conservative, the value of individual liberty is not absolute,but stands subject to another higher value,the authority of established government." (Scruton,1984,p.19).

Already the philosophical differences between the liberal-conservative "political nation" and the "cultural nation" espoused by Scruton are becoming clear.For proponents of the "political nation",the nation is only a limited community,based on political association or legal contracts such as citizenship.In the "cultural nation",the freedom and interests of the individual cannot be abstracted from the interests of the whole or from the community of culture,tradition and allegiance in which man's life attains social meaning.For Scruton,man is a social animal rooted in his community.



"A man stands in a current of some common life. The important thing is that the life of social arrangements may become mingled with the life of its members. They may feel in themselves the persistence of the will that surrounds them. The conservative instinct is founded in that feeling: it is the enactment of historical vitality, the individual's sense of his society's will to live." (Scruton, 1984, p. 21).

Society is an organism, something greater than the aggregate of its individuals and the conservative's task is to maintain the unity and traditions of society. Crucially, Scruton's conservatism regards society as an end in itself, rather than just a means to some other end such as individual freedom or social justice. The cement of society, binding individuals into a collective whole, is allegiance to established authority, whether it be the common culture or constitutional traditions. Social unity emerges from a common culture: it is this which structures and gives content to the actions of each person. A common culture is made up of shared traditions, history and experiences, and from this national institutions grow. This echoes Burke's idea of the "national essence" linking state and civil society. Patriotism and allegiance to national institutions act as a bridge between civil society: it is patriotism which gives the individual a sense of belonging in the wider collective whole. Scruton argues that there are strong links between his brand of conservatism and patriotism because conservatism's focus is on a particular nation and its character, not on universal principles. Also, this conservatism stresses the role of common culture in the development of shared understanding and communal solidarity (Scruton, 1984, pp. 36-38).

The cultural nation is a community transcending the individuals within it. It links civil society and state through the allegiance arising from submission to authority. Following Hegel, Scruton regards allegiance to the



nation as a step on from the authority exercised within the family unit.<sup>5</sup> The family is a non-contractual body, arising from necessity and natural bonds. Membership of the national community is similar in that it emerges from a recognition of necessity and dependence on an outside will (Scruton, 1984, pp.31-33). The dangers of this "cultural nation" are obvious: the submergence of individual identity in the collective whole, the potential for social tyranny in a society seeking cultural unity, and the threats to individual autonomy and the plural society.

Scruton's cultural concept of the nation is in evidence in his article "In Defence of the Nation" in which he is again critical of liberal accounts of state and society (Scruton, 1990).<sup>6</sup> Liberal theories of the state neglect concepts of social unity or communal membership, seeing the state itself as the source of unity. This criticism applies to both mainstream liberal theory and the "political" account of the nation espoused by the liberal-conservative wing of the New Right. Both lack an account of the nation as a community, focusing instead on the political association as the arena in which social identity is developed. For Scruton, the nation is a pre-political entity based on shared language, history and association and a common culture (Scruton, 1990, p.71). Membership of the national community is self-conscious and hence of moral worth:

"This self-consciousness of a nation is part of its moral character. It endows nations with a life of their own, a destiny, even a personality. People who think of themselves as a collective 'we' understand their successes and failures as 'ours' and apportion collective praise and blame for the common outcome." (Scruton, 1990, pp.71-2).

National identity emerges through shared values and experiences which gain content through the medium of a common culture. A common culture "impresses the matter of experience with a moral form" (Scruton, 1990, p. 60) by providing a framework in which individual actions can be judged in terms of traditional, collective values. Man is not an isolated individual in an atomized or pluralistic association, but is a social creature. Membership of human collectives is not political (ie based on social contracts or voluntary citizenship) but social, existing prior to and independent of the state. Scruton takes the attachment to a non-political form of membership to be a core conservative trait, and one distinguishing the conservative from the liberal. States which lose the national idea as a basis of unity often try to restore communal solidarity through collective or nationalist ideologies: national identity is to be valued, but expansionist nationalisms are dangerous. National identity provides the moral values of identity and unity lacking in the liberal separation of state and civil society. The nation-state is "the state at the extreme of self-consciousness" (Scruton, 1984, p. 185).

"The identity of a nation over time has a clear moral aspect, and the reaffirmation of this identity, through acts of pride and contrition, is part of belonging, and of living under immovable obligations." (Scruton, 1990, p. 75).

The nation is important as the community in which man's pre-social ties of unity and allegiance are rooted. It bridges the gap between the state, whose political institutions are related to the national character, and civil society in a way in which liberalism cannot match. Scruton's conservatism follows Burke in seeing the nation as a link over time by

means of shared traditions and Hegel in emphasizing the links between family, civil society and the state.

"The legitimacy of the state depends upon its ability to overcome the separation inherent in civil society, and to recuperate in free and legal form the sense of belonging which surrounds us at birth, and nurtures our identity. Our existence as political beings does not derive from the state, but from spheres of social loyalty, and it is by means of such loyalty that the state persists." (Scruton, 1990, p. 84).

But Scruton's cultural account of the nation moves away from the Burkean ideal of the conservative nation by stressing common culture and the unity of the collective, mirroring the authoritarian elements in his wider political thought. O'Sullivan, a proponent of the political account of the nation, criticizes Scruton for the "anti-constitutionalism" implicit in his ideas of pre-political unity and his cultural nationalism (O'Sullivan, 1989, a). He argues that rather than the optimal rule of law, the "desire for the company of one's kind" is Scruton's basis for association. The quest for collective identity and national unity, plus his stress on overcoming alienation through shared culture, are more akin to the rationalist or collectivist goals of "activist politics" than to the "limited politics" of moderate conservatism (O'Sullivan, 1975). Gray argues that the common culture and traditions of England venerated by Scruton are in fact essentially individualist and that Thatcherism, of which Scruton is critical, attempts to restore the cultural preconditions of individuality (J. Gray, 1990).

Rayner argues that for cultural conservatives, the individual is not an autonomous being but one conscious of his identity only through cultural practices, which thus become valued and authoritative in their own right (Rayner, 1986). Because of his reliance on common culture as the basis of



social unity, the cultural conservative resorts to myths and ideology. Scruton himself recognises the importance of myths and symbols for allegiance to and membership of the national community with the monarchy a particularly important symbol of nationhood. A person's allegiance to the monarch is based on:

"A sense of the monarch as a symbol of nationhood, as an incarnation of the historical entity of which he is a part. His loyalty to the monarchy requires certain ceremonial enactment, customary usage, an established code of deference. The monarch forms part of that surface of concepts and symbols whereby the citizen can perceive his social identity, and perceive society not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself." (Scruton, 1984, p.39).

But Scruton's idea of the subjective nature of national identity, noting its roots in shared traditions and experiences, has to rely on myths of cultural homogeneity and organic development to counter other accounts of nationhood.

Under Scruton's editorship, "The Salisbury Review" has limited national identity to the preservation of those cultural and moral traditions threatened by modernity and individualist doctrines. His political concerns flow from his belief in the importance of national unity and common culture. Thus immigration is regarded as a threat to the British way of life and its political and cultural traditions of allegiance to the constitution. Discussing the implications of the Salman Rushdie affair, Scruton described British national identity as shaped by a common language and history, and crucially by legal and constitutional traditions.<sup>7</sup> England is only a part of the legal British nation-state, but is the focus of its ethnic and cultural identity. Scruton's stance on the Rushdie affair further illustrated his

doubts at the improbability of those "purporting to be British" becoming integrated into the British legal, cultural and political traditions which make up national identity. His contributions to "The Salisbury Review" also reveal an antipathy to internationalism in foreign affairs (Scruton, 1981). Foreign policy should not be based on abstract principle or liberal internationalism (as President Carter's US foreign policy was), but on the protection and promotion of the national interest. This isolationist account of the national interest is again defined in terms of the overriding principles of the preservation of national unity and the common culture, leading the Salisbury Group to reject moves towards closer European integration.

Scruton's authoritarian conservatism and cultural account of the nation is representative of the thought of the Salisbury Group. The group's journal "The Salisbury Review" has published several important essays on the concept of the nation. Graham Dawson's discussion of the nation and the individual in his article "Freedom, State and Tradition" is worth quoting at length as it expresses much of the sentiment of the Salisbury Group. For Dawson the state is merely a means of regulating relations between individuals, but the nation is of crucial importance, shaping the very nature of the individual. His is a deterministic view of the nation as a natural and organic growth, a pre-political unity shaping the individual.

"What makes a nation the nation that it is, is the congeries of customs and traditions which it has inherited. And so it is these customs and traditions that constitute at least in part its people as the people they are. It follows that a person would not be the person he is if it were not for the customs and traditions which have given him his passions and prejudices, his instincts and intuitions. *Without what he owes the nation in which he was born, an individual is less than fully human being.* Liberals and libertarians alike fail to give due weight to



this consideration. In their different ways they both aim to make the individual the be-all and end-all of society but succeed only in diminishing him." (Dawson, 1984, pp 47-48) *{Italics added}*.

Casey's "One Nation: The Politics Of Race."

One of the most important and controversial articles published by "The Salisbury Review" is John Casey's "One Nation: The Politics of Race" (Casey, 1982). As with Scruton, Casey's writings are primarily concerned with aesthetics, but his political thought reveals a conservatism which is cultural and authoritarian in tone. He focuses on common culture, authority, tradition and allegiance as the key conservative values, and the ones which distinguish the conservative from his liberal opponents (Casey, 1978).

"To see customs and institutions as purely instrumental to some good envisaged for man as an isolated, atomic being can be seen from both the Marxist and cultural points of view as making it impossible for man to regard himself as either part of the community or as part of an historical continuity." (Casey, 1978, pp. 90-91).

Conservative man achieves access to the world and communal identity through national traditions and common culture. Casey's cultural conservatism mirrors Scruton's in its emphasis on "piety" or man's capacity for respect and allegiance to place, age and forms of social institutions which act as the bridge between civil society and the state (Casey, 1978; Covell, 1986).

Casey's article on the concept of the nation criticises the "rootless individualism" of liberal theory and stresses the centrality of the nation to social and political life. He draws on the Burkean definition of a nation as a partnership across generations, held together by national traditions, and adds to it an emphasis on the centrality of common culture to national



community and identity. Coleridge and Burke are cited as exponents of a conservative tradition of cultural nationalism, but one which has declined within the Conservative Party and is often criticized as "racialist" (Casey, 1982, p.24). The Conservative Party's conversion to market economics has resulted in a decline in its use of the language of community and nation and its loss of credibility in its claims to be the "national party". He follows Powell in arguing that Northern Ireland must remain a part of the United Kingdom because a majority of its citizens consider themselves to be British. The same subjective definition of nationality is for Casey applicable to the Falkland Islanders who though, not legally British under the terms of the British Nationality Act, were British in terms of "language, custom and race" (Casey, 1982, p.25). For Casey, then, nationality is a sentiment springing from a common cultural milieu of shared traditions, allegiance and respect for authority.

"In the case of the English, and the British, it seems certain that the sentiment of nationality is inseparably bound up with shared history, law, custom and kinship. The moral life finds its fulfilment only in an actual, historic human community, and above all in a nation state. The 'sentiment' of nationality is actually one's ability to see the community in which one lives, in all its variety of customs and practices, as issuing in a nation, and to see that as a moral idea." (Casey, 1982, p.25).

Loyalty and allegiance to one's own people and community is a "moral and noble idea" for cultural conservatives such as Casey and Scruton. Nationhood for Casey as for Dawson is a natural and noble thing which must be fostered in the present climate of declining community, authority and morality.

"The state of nationhood is the true state of man and the danger of ignoring the sentiment of nationhood is actually the danger of the destruction of man as a political animal." (Casey, 1982, p. 28).

Casey's conservatism is similar to Scruton's in that both find authoritative traditions and collective meaning in a common culture. Both imply that cultural homogeneity is the optimal state of affairs and that plural societies lose the traditional bonds of national identity. Casey's article aroused controversy for its discussion of coloured immigrants within the United Kingdom as "structurally likely to be at odds with English civilization" (Casey, 1982, p. 25). This and similar sentiments expressed by other contributors to "The Salisbury Review" in particular produced the "New Right, New Racism" thesis which will be discussed below. Casey sees British national traditions as based on an acceptance of authority, but believes this is being undermined by the growth in the number of West Indian immigrants living in the inner cities, "alienating" the cities from the rest of national life. Differences in culture between the West Indian and British are of concern for Casey, but the main perceived "problem" is that West Indian immigrants and their families form an identifiably separate community. Casey associates West Indians with a political culture opposed to authority and thus anathema to the British political tradition. To him, the phrase "black Englishmen" is paradoxical.

"I do not wish to say that the problem about the West Indian community is just a problem about the possible destruction of civilized life in the centres of the big cities. (Although this is what is happening.) It is also that all this offends a sentiment- a sense of what English life should be. What it offends is the sentiment that 'this is our country'." (Casey, 1982, p. 26).

For Casey differences in culture and the size of the coloured immigrant community precludes integration, and he believes that the majority of people are hostile to the concept of a multi-racial society. Those from "alien" cultural backgrounds cannot fully understand or develop the allegiances and values of the English way of life. National identity cannot be artificially created but is a natural development of man's immersion in the culture and traditions of a historical community. Casey proposes the repatriation of a proportion of the immigrant population to prevent what he perceives as a threat to "Englishness" and the essence of the national community.

Other contributors to "The Salisbury Review" have also emphasized the importance of the concept of the nation to cultural conservatism, and have again attacked ideas of multi-culturalism. Richard Cronin thus shares Casey's diagnosis of the decline of national identity as a symptom of Britain's wider decline (Cronin, 1987). The nation is seen as important in shaping the character and moral values of the individual: the decline of patriotism is bound up with a widespread loss of respect for authority and the decline of traditional moral values. The nation is also the arena in which shared values are generated and spread. Patriotism and national sentiment allow the individual to feel part of a community, preventing his alienation.

"The real value of the nation-state seems to me moral and aesthetic. Just as the family offers me the arena in which my demand for an intense imaginative life is best exercised, so that nation organizes my need for an imaginative life that is wide and various." (Cronin, 1987, p.46).



Clive Ashworth presents a sociological account of the nation, but one again conforming to the values of cultural conservatism. Nationalism is depicted as a natural state, linking the individual with his fellow countrymen within the national territory and across the generations. The nation is a natural focus of allegiance, with patriotism the ultimate focus of loyalty and communal solidarity.

"We may say that the nation is ubiquitous, and that human beings live in nations with the same certainty and compulsion as certain species of fish live in shoals, and certain species of dogs live in packs. Because of their ultimate nature, nations require of their members a transcendent loyalty which knows nothing higher, and which all lower loyalties presuppose, and that therefore nationalism is a perfectly justifiable attitude, indeed an unavoidable one." (Ashworth, 1983, p. 8).

Nationalism survives in concrete form through the propagation of myths and the "subjective compulsion" generated by transcendental experiences of nationhood. Myths produce the "collective consciousness" of nationhood and the "corporate imagination" of shared experiences. These experiences are natural and overwhelming, thus having "the character of God about them" (Ashworth, 1983, p. 11). Strong traditions and a developed sense of nationalism are the hallmarks of successful nation-states.

#### "New Right, New Racism."

The authoritarian branch of the New Right has produced a cultural concept of the nation in which the nation is seen as a natural unit, a crucial element of which is allegiance to the shared culture. There are significant tensions between this cultural account and the Burkean ideal of the conservative nation. The former looks to cultural homogeneity as the

key to national unity, and its stress on the paramount importance of loyalty to the collective whole undermines the freedom of the individual. Whereas the conservative nation defines national identity as a subjective experience based on shared values, traditions and loyalty, the cultural account of the nation offers a more explicitly ethnic account of nationhood. Implicitly the conservative nation's focus on the shared traditions of a historical society as the basis of national identity mean that those people having alternative allegiances may be incompatible with membership of the national community (Reeves, 1983, ch.5). The cultural account of the nation goes much further than this by arguing that national identity and the unity of the nation are undermined by the incorporation of alien cultures into society. Membership of the national community is open to those whose values and experiences are shaped by the common culture. Man's crucial loyalties and social identity emerge not from his experiences in an artificially-created political association but from a framework of traditional, pre-political values.

The cultural account of the nation has been interpreted in some quarters as a new type of racism in which the concepts of culture, nation and race are fused (Barker, 1981; Gordon & King, 1986). Parekh identifies four key propositions of New Right accounts of nationhood; (i) a state is held together by national unity; (ii) nationality is a sentiment found in those of common stock, implying that homogeneity is essential for strong national identity; (iii) black communities are from different national traditions and thus cannot be successfully integrated into the British (cultural) nation; (iv) the preservation of nationhood is of supreme moral importance and thus justifies policies of repatriation or assimilation (Parekh, 1986, p.39).

Articles by members of the Salisbury Group confirm that cultural conservatism regards cultural homogeneity as necessary for a strong national identity. Casey, Honeyford and others have attacked "anti-racism" and "multi-culturalism" as anathema to "natural" or "common sense" understanding of nationhood. The "New Right, New Racism" thesis argues that cultural conservatism regards the nation as the core social unit, membership of which is natural and inevitable. The national community is founded on a common culture and it is an irreversible feature of human nature that man should wish to live with those who share his culture. Powell and Honeyford claim that the desire to live with people of "one's own kind" is not a racist sentiment, but a natural one rooted in human nature and "common sense". This appeal to common sense or human nature allows the cultural conservatives to claim that they are not racist, but merely expressing suppressed truths. The notion of racism is turned on its head so that those who advocate a multi-cultural society are presented as running against the grain of human nature. The white majority in Britain are depicted as the real victims of racism because liberal immigration policies have undermined cultural homogeneity and national unity. Positive discrimination and anti-racist education are regarded as forms of "institutionalized racism" by the liberal establishment against the white majority (Gordon & King, 1986, pp. 13-41)

Ray Honeyford, the headmaster of a Bradford school primarily made up of ethnically Asian pupils caused much public controversy in the mid-1980s when he claimed that multi-ethnic education was damaging the prospects of white children (Honeyford, 1983; Randall, 1988).<sup>9</sup> For Honeyford, the teaching of minority cultures and languages within British schools was producing a



"multi-ethnic nightmare", while positive discrimination was leading to lower standards. Schools should instead teach British history and culture for "the natural, organic location of a minority culture is outside the school, within the minority group itself" (Honeyford, 1983, p.13). Honeyford and other critics argue that the integration of ethnic minorities into British society is hindered rather than helped by anti-racist strategies as these patronize black people, making them more self-conscious of ethnic differences. Critics have turned anti-racist arguments on their heads by claiming that the anti-racists are the true racists, grouping people according to their colour and thus denying their individuality. Dennis O'Keefe and Anthony Flew have claimed in "The Salisbury Review" that special treatment for immigrants is equivalent to "institutionalized racism" against whites, and that anti-racist strategies are the real cause of ethnic tensions because they rather than the cultural conservatives insist on a wide definition of the term "race" which fails to note the differences between race and culture (O'Keefe, 1989; Flew, 1989). Flew argues that the Commission for Racial Equality undermines a colour-blind perspective on British society by grouping people according to race. He calls for its abolition as it is engaged upon an "assault on Britishness" by promoting multi-cultural education. A multi-racial society is an unwelcome burden on Britain's welfare and education services, and is undermining the national community (Mishan, 1988).<sup>2</sup>

The cultural conservatives of the Salisbury Group share Enoch Powell's diagnosis of the detrimental effects of immigration and multi-culturalism on national identity and social order. Casey argues that West Indians are ill at ease with the British tradition of respect for authority, while Honeyford and others claim that the educational achievements of West Indian children

do not match those of their white counterparts. There is a perception among cultural conservatives that the concentration of ethnic minorities in urban areas has undermined the character of the inner cities and contributed to a rise in crime. Although cultural conservatives share a similar diagnosis about the damaging effects of immigration on national identity, they are divided on how to respond. Casey argues for repatriation and reducing the status of blacks to that of guest workers. Powell saw repatriation and a complete halt to immigration as essential steps. But the existence of settled black communities, who now have British citizenship, makes these strategies unworkable and inappropriate. Parekh sees Powellism as an "assimilationist" strategy which demands that ethnic minority communities be forcibly assimilated into the "British way of life" (Parekh, 1990, b). This approach rejects the integrationist belief in the virtues of a diverse and tolerant society, arguing that immigrants must be prepared to give up their own national and cultural traditions if these clash with British culture and prevent full allegiance to the British way of life. Ideas of assimilation are present in Powellism and cultural conservatism, but fit uneasily with the belief in national homogeneity and the impossibility of integration. Parekh's confusion - he argues that the New Right believe that blacks can never be British in the cultural or subjective sense, yet also claims that theirs is an assimilationist strategy - reflects the tension between exclusivist and assimilationist strategies in cultural conservatism.

### Summary and Conclusions.

The "New Right, New Racism" thesis is a useful one because it outlines the move away from the traditional conservative nation towards a cultural account of the nation in which common culture is a key element of nationhood. However, the extent to which the cultural nation looks at race as the basis of membership of the national community is exaggerated by this account. The concern of Salisbury Group members is the protection of "Britishness", understood as national identity and a shared common culture. It tends towards seeing national identity in both ethnic and ideological terms ie full membership of the national community depends upon acceptance of the culture and traditions of the dominant ethnic group. The racial discrimination inherent in cultural conservatism does not arise from a stated belief in the superiority of a particular racial group, but from a belief that not all cultures are of equal value and that cultural integration is undesirable and unworkable. By claiming that cultural homogeneity is essential to a strong sense of national identity and unity, cultural conservatives necessarily believe that any action promoting cultural pluralism undermines the nation. Discussions of culture become explicitly concerned with race issues because alternative cultures are seen as alien and incompatible with the British way of life and the desire to live in a homogeneous (ethnic) national community is perceived as rooted in human nature. Casey's claim that West Indians culture is incompatible with respect for authority or his refusal to accept that there could be "black Englishmen", plus Honeyford's argument that ethnic minority pupils are of lesser ability than whites, are examples of explicitly racist themes. However, the claims of the "New Right, New Racism" thesis are weakened by its



proponents sharing the same lack of conceptual clarity concerning the terms "race","nation" and "culture" as the cultural conservatives they attack.

I argued earlier that the cultural account is unacceptable as a moderate conservative concept of the nation because of its intolerance of diversity, its emphasis on loyalty to the nation at the expense of individual freedom, and its belief that a common culture (in the sense of allegiance to traditional institutions and political culture) is the bedrock of the national community. The Burkean account of the nation linked political allegiances with membership of a traditional, historical community. The cultural nation claims that man's identity and social character emerges from the matrix of a common culture, with those individuals having a culture "alien" to this permanently excluded from membership of the national group. In the hands of the cultural conservatives, the nation becomes an exclusivist and ethnic entity, and one which is dangerously racist when demands of cultural homogeneity are used to justify repatriation and an end to the plural society. The cultural definition of nationhood explicitly focuses on the problems of incorporating other groups into the national community which are only implicitly recognized in the conservative values of tradition and organicism. The claims of the "New Racism" thesis that Thatcherism marks a move towards a racialization of British politics will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight. At this stage though it is interesting to note that the same problems of conceptual clarity occur here and the practical influence of the cultural conservatives on the policies of the Thatcher governments was negligible.

The political account of the nation also departs from the Burkean model of the conservative nation, moving towards a liberal focus on the individual and an associated rejection of the claims of community. This is particularly evident in the thought of Hayek, for whom the nation seems a momentary obstacle to the ideal of a universal Great Society. For both Hayek and Oakeshott society is an aggregate of sovereign individuals, held together by the rules of a limited political association, and not by communal solidarity.

In the chapter on Thatcherism, I will note how the political and cultural accounts of the nation have been fused into an uneasy doctrinal alliance which marks a departure from the "national strategies" of Disraeli and Baldwin. Before that though, the next chapter assesses Powellism as a new "nationalist" strategy based around policies on immigration, Europe and Northern Ireland.

#### Footnotes.

1. See Sir Keith Joseph: *"Stranded on the Middle Ground? Reflections on Circumstances and Policies"*, Centre for Policy Studies, London, 1976 and Sir Keith Joseph: *"Monetarism is not Enough"*, Centre for Policy Studies, London, 1976.
2. On libertarian theory and the New Right see David Green: *The New Right: The Counter-Revolution in Political, Economic and Social Thought*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1987.
3. Oakeshott's political thought is examined in Paul Franco: *The Political Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott*, Yale University Press, London, 1990 and W.H. Greenleaf: *Oakeshott's Philosophical Politics*, Longman, London, 1966.
4. Another liberal-conservative account of politics is found in Shirley Letwin: "On Conservative Individualism" in Maurice Cowling (ed): *Conservative Essays*. Cassell, London, 1978. Her thought is examined in Covell (1986).
5. Covell (1986) examines the Hegelian and Wittgensteinian elements in the thought of Scruton and Casey. See also Alan Ryan: "Roger Scruton and

Neo-Conservatism" in G.Cohen et al: *The New Right:Image and Reality*. Runnymede Trust,London,1986.

6. Reprinted in Roger Scruton: *The Philosopher on Dover Beach*, Carcanet, London,1990.
7. On "The Clive James Talk Show", BBC2, 11th February 1990.
8. See also Ray Honeyford: "Education and Race:An Alternative View" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol.2,no.2,1984. pp.30-33 and Ray Honeyford: *Race and Free Speech:Violating the Taboo*. Claridge Blasts No.6, Claridge Press, St Albans,1992.
9. See also David Dale: "The New Ideology of Race", in *The Salisbury Review*, vol.4,no.1,1985. pp.17-22; Anthony Flew: "The Race Relations Industry" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol.2,no.2,1984. pp.24-27; Anthony Flew: "Three Concepts of Racism" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol.5,no.1,1986. pp.2-6. Compare these with the more liberal approach of John Gray: "The Politics of Cultural Diversity" in *The Salisbury Review*, vol.7,no.1,1988. pp.38-45.



#### CHAPTER FOUR: POWELLISM: A NATIONALIST STRATEGY.

Renewed interest in the conservative concept of the nation found its most significant expression in the speeches and writings of Enoch Powell from the late 1960s onwards. Powellism offered the Conservative Party a new "nationalist strategy", built on a redefined concept of the nation, and an avowedly nationalist approach to some of the key issues facing British governments in the period. Powell approached political issues from a nationalist position: his main concern was to defend the identity and interests of a clearly-defined national group. Powellite discourse is notable for the clarity and consistency of its concept of nationhood, and from this idea, Powell constructed a strategy geared towards a reassertion of national identity and self-government. The main planks of this nationalist strategy were a reduction in immigration, a call for new citizenship rules, opposition to British membership of the European Community (EC) and a commitment to the Union with Northern Ireland.

Powell began espousing a nationalist strategy in the mid-1960s, though earlier he had supported British applications for membership of the EC and been a committed imperialist. He was also the first significant Conservative politician to advocate a New Right commitment to a minimal role for the state in economic affairs, his opposition to high levels of public expenditure prompting his resignation from the Treasury in 1958. But his belief that the state had a role in providing a minimum standard of social services was countered by his ideological opposition to egalitarianism. Both his laissez-faire economics and his calls for repatriation broke with the

prevailing consensus and challenged the "Right Progressives" dominant role in the Conservative Party (Gamble,1974).In the mid-1960s,Powell argued that the Conservative Party had to be "the party of free choice, free competition and free enterprise..the party of capitalism" if it was to have anything relevant to say (Powell,1965,p.24).The Powellite mixture of economic liberalism and a revived language of nationhood is also important as a forerunner of Thatcherism,although the tensions between the two branches of thought are less apparent in Powellism.Ken Phillips argues that Powell's support for the capitalist economy,for minimum standards of social services and for a revived national identity form a coherent doctrine.

"The consistency between Powell's dimension of corporate philanthropy and nationalism lies in the interconnection between his portrayal of society as a community and of the nation as an organic entity.. Corporate philanthropy is the expression of the national community's care and compassion for its members;nationalism is the psychological and cultural component that weds a society to its political form,the nation." (Phillips,1977,p.117).

At the heart of Powell's political thought is his quest for a revised national identity.Powell recognized that national identity,Britain's role in the world,and the philosophy of the Conservative Party were all facing major challenges,yet believed that little thought was being directed to adapting to such changes.He thus constructed a nationalist strategy which redefined British national identity and offered a means through which the Conservative Party could resume its place as the "nationalist party *par excellence*".This concern with national identity in the face of Britain's decline from world-power status was first presented in his speech at Trinity College,Dublin in 1964.Here he argued for a "realistic" understanding of modern national identity,to be arrived at through a conscious process of

myth selection and rejection. Powell had come to believe that myths of empire and British economic strength were key reasons behind national self-doubt and hindered modernization. To recover, the British needed a new national identity, redefined in the light of the post-war world.

The Powellite concept of the nation draws on familiar conservative themes, but presents them in a new configuration which adapts them to changed circumstances and adds its own myths. Powell stresses the organic nature of British constitutional evolution and the parliamentary nature of its political culture. The British people are linked with their institutions through the parliamentary nature of national identity. Patriotic allegiance and constitutionalism are fundamental features of the national character, cementing strong bonds between people and state. Also present in Powellism is the conservative belief in the role of tradition and the past in shaping the collective mind and providing a repository of wisdom which can be drawn upon when addressing contemporary problems. Powell views man as a social animal and society as an organic community rather than an aggregate of atomistic individuals. Powell's focus is more directly on the primacy of the national community than is the case with Burke or Baldwin, hence Powell's status as a nationalist. The nation is the dominant form of community, shaping man's identity and values.

"In order to live a full and satisfying life, a man needs to have a picture not only of the community to which he belongs and of his place in it, but also of the place and destiny of that community in the outside world." (Powell, 1965, p. 7).

Powell also departs from the traditional conservative nation by rejecting old myths of empire and world responsibility, replacing them with



his own brand of mysticism built on parliamentary sovereignty, national homogeneity and British isolation. For Powell, the nation is a subjective and transcendental entity, held together by the "corporate imagination". Instead of defining a nation in terms of objective features such as its territory or language, Powell looks to a nation's history, the homogeneity and unity of its people and their shared experiences as the root of nationhood. "The life of nations, no less than that of men, is lived largely in the imagination." (Powell, 1965, p. 136). As social beings, individuals identify with their nation, so that in periods of national decline or self-doubt, all patriots share in its "psychosomatic illness". National consciousness is built around the corporate imagination of a nation's past, which expresses itself in the form of myth.

"All history is myth..The moment a fact enters into history it becomes mythical because it has been taken and fitted into its place in a set of ordered relationships which is the creation of the human mind. A nation lives by its myths..my particular thesis is that some of the British people's most important myths in this period of time are bad myths, harmful myths, and that they need urgently to be replaced by better." (Powell, 1965, p. 137).

Powell's redefinition of British national identity rejects the 19th century myths of empire and industrial strength: they are falsehoods or fictions and must be replaced by a "realistic" view of nationhood. He claims that the British people were largely unaware of the empire until its decline began, producing a false belief in an imperial "golden age". "The British Empire as we know it in political mythology, was an invention." (Powell, 1965, p. 139). It was a deliberate creation of the age of Disraeli and Chamberlain whose ideas of imperial union were "castles in the air", fallacies designed

to mask Britain's decline by offering illusions of racial union or working-class prosperity.

The second myth to cause modern Britain's self-doubt or psychosomatic illness is that of Britain as the "workshop of the world". This was also invented in the 1880s to conceal long-term economic decline behind a facade of industrial strength. The significance of the myth for modern Britain is that it has produced a false belief that Britain's economic weakness is a new phenomenon indicating national decline. This was Britain's "private hell" with empire as a soothing myth or "private heaven". The British corporate imagination is rooted in delusion: the nation must learn to know itself again.

Powell's "realistic" national identity is, though, still built upon myth. He seeks the essence of British national identity in its unique parliamentary traditions, the continuity of its history and the homogeneity of its people. This view of English history as a unique and continuous procession of rights and duties within a framework of parliamentary sovereignty is a consistent theme in Powell's account of the British nation. Britain is a "parliamentary nation": the Westminster parliament is the symbol of the nation's constitutional development and, as a sovereign body represents national homogeneity in the sense of common allegiance to a single sovereign. As I shall explore in greater detail below, Powell argued that joining the EC undermined the sovereignty of parliament and thus Britain's identity as a parliamentary nation, while immigration undermines common allegiance and acceptance of one sovereign authority (Powell, 1991, p. 25-37).

Powell is nostalgic for a lost England of constitutional balance and national homogeneity.

"The unity of England,effortless and unconstrained,which accepts the unlimited supremacy of the Crown..the homogeneity of England..the continuity of England,which has brought this unity and this homogeneity about by the slow alchemy of centuries.The unbroken life of the English nation over a thousand years and more is a phenomenon unique in history. Institutions which elsewhere are recent and artificial creations,appear in England almost as works of nature,spontaneous and unquestioned." (Powell,1965,p.145).

Powell expresses the familiar conservative organic view of English history,focusing on unity,continuity and homogeneity. Parliament and the Crown are at the core of this concept of national identity.Nationhood and national consciousness are subjective phenomena, rooted in history and the national past.Nineteenth century myths may have been rejected as inappropriate to the reality of postwar Britain,but Powellism relies heavily on an exaggerated account of the importance of parliament to British national identity.Powell's focus on the sovereignty of the Westminster parliament is at the heart of his opposition to EC membership and his fervent Unionism.This attachment to parliamentary sovereignty itself takes on an air of myth in its reading of constitutional history and its preoccupation with indivisible sovereignty.Powell views parliament as the repository of the civil liberties of the British people and admits to a belief in "the magic of the free Parliament of a united nation" (Powell, 1991,p.502).Through the immigration issue,Powell popularized his nationalist strategy,but his belief in parliamentary democracy as a source of national identity and unity reveal that Powell was essentially a parliamentarian who achieved brief status as a populist figure when he broke away from the careful management of race issues fostered by both main parties (Schoen,



1977). Powell's belief that the British people would rally to defend their parliamentary inheritance against the EC signalled a profound weakness in his nationalist strategy and a misunderstanding of the potency of national identity.

The myth of parliamentary sovereignty is related to Powell's belief that Britain will prosper from isolationism, rejecting membership of the EC and abandoning its fictional commitments to the Commonwealth. As Shadow Defence Secretary, Powell argued that Britain should withdraw from many of her world commitments, especially in the Far East, as these were remnants of the imperial age and no longer appropriate for Britain's declined status. A rational assessment of British power and capabilities showed the futility of the Commonwealth which was built on imperial memories and unrealistic expectations of Britain's world role. The Commonwealth encouraged misplaced paternalism in terms of overseas aid and commitments to immigration and fictional citizenships. Only a complete withdrawal from imperial commitments could prevent national humiliation and further damage to the national interest (Powell, 1969, pp. 246-280). Isolation would also free Britain from the unwelcome influence of the United States, anti-Americanism being a consistent theme in Powell's writings.

#### The European Community.

Powell depicted parliamentary sovereignty and British nationhood as threatened by British moves towards membership of the EC in the early 1970s, though he had supported earlier British applications for trade reasons. He turned against membership of the EC when it became apparent

that the ultimate goal of the Community was economic and monetary union, which would inevitably bring a large degree of political union. The formation of the Common Agricultural Policy in 1969 also moved the EC away from its free trade ideals. The price of any economic benefits of membership, and Powell argued that there were few such benefits, had then to be measured against the costs of economic and political union. The inevitable consequence of EC membership was the loss of national sovereignty, with the British people - forming only a fraction of the European electorate - unable to control their own national affairs.

"Parliament, and in particular the House of Commons, would no longer be the body which took the principle decisions which govern the economic and social life of the people of this country and which determines its safety and even its existence." (Powell, 1973, pp. 41/2).

Powell believed that under the Treaty of Rome, parliament would lose its legislative supremacy in Britain. This is a crucial concern for he believes that the legislative sovereignty of parliament is at the heart of the nation's independence and identity. By joining the EC, Westminster is forced to forfeit exclusive control over taxation and public expenditure, while the independence of the judiciary is also lost. EC membership entails the loss of national sovereignty, which he defines as "political independence and self-government" (Powell, 1991, pp. 474-480). Powell recognizes that no nation is free to do what it wishes, that nations are mutually dependent and that signing treaties is an expression of national sovereignty not its denial. However membership of the EC is fundamentally different.

"A nation may enter into contract or associations or agreements and thereby voluntarily limit its freedom,as does any individual who signs a contract.But this is totally different from deliberately giving up for all time the freedom in future to take a decision.In a political and economic union of Europe it would be contradictory to speak or think of national sovereignty in the sense in which it exists at present." (Hansard,v.809,cols 1372-3,1971)

Sovereignty cannot be pooled or shared in the EC for Britain would lose its character as a "parliamentary nation", whose membership is based on common allegiance to the sovereign authority of the Crown-in-Parliament. Powell was particularly critical of the way in which British membership was negotiated by the Heath government.In the 1970 election campaign Heath had promised that British membership would only come about "with the full consent of parliament and people" and the Conservative manifesto had committed the party only to negotiation. However once in power the Heath government accepted the Community rules before negotiations began and membership was achieved without the mandate of the people and with only slim parliamentary majorities after "guillotined" debates.Powell's bitter relations with Heath and the party leadership at the time saw him accuse Heath of breaking the "compact between parliament and people" and then leave the Conservative Party, encouraging people to vote Labour in the February 1974 election in the hope of ending British membership of the Community. Powell also opposes Britain's membership of the Community on the grounds of this country's traditional separateness from continental Europe.

"In respect of our nationhood,I say we are not part of the continent of Europe.The whole development and nature of our national identity and consciousness has not been merely separate from that of the countries of the continent of Europe but actually antithetical.In our history..the principal events which have placed their stamp upon our consciousness..were the moments in which we have been alone, confronting a Europe which was lost or hostile." (Hansard,vol 809, p1376).



Britain's political separateness from continental Europe is again related to the sovereignty of parliament and the refusal to accept authority from outside the realm. Britain's political tradition is different from that of continental Europe, and though rarely talking of the nation in terms of "culture", such arguments imply that cultural differences also set Britain apart. Membership of the Community would mean the surrendering of the "highest political good", namely national independence, and would also undermine the basis of British national identity. Powell opposed direct elections to the European Parliament and viewed extensions of its powers as incompatible with the sovereign authority of the Westminster parliament as the only body representing and making law for the British nation. The Community's legal system has also undermined the authority of the British courts:

"There is a name for appealing over the head of the Crown to an authority outside the realm, and that name is treason..consciously or not, the British people have withdrawn acceptance from their institutions in favour of institutions which are not theirs." (Powell, 1989, p.61).

Powell has renewed his attacks on the Community in the face of moves towards greater economic and monetary union, directing much of his venom at the Conservative Party for supporting such developments and reneging on its traditional role as the national party. For Powell the Conservative Party is "the nationalist party *par excellence*", associated with patriotism and the defence of British nationhood. "A Conservative Party which cannot present itself to the country as a national party suffers under a severe handicap." (Powell, 1989, p.126). Powell saw Mrs Thatcher as a representative of the nation in her role as Prime Minister, supporting her handling of the

Falklands War. He was though critical of the way in which Thatcher kept Britain in the Community despite her support for the principle of nationhood and her recognition of Britain's historical difference from continental Europe (as expressed in the Bruges Speech). Thatcher failed to understand the centrality of parliamentary sovereignty to national independence, being more concerned with the defeat of socialism.

#### Powell and Unionism.

Powell interprets the Northern Ireland issue in terms of nationhood and parliamentary democracy. Nationhood is a subjective status, so a nation only exists when its people demonstrate their unity and see themselves as part of a wider community with a common idea of itself.

"We can identify a nation, as it were, only after the event. We cannot identify a nation by historical, sociological and cultural studies. A nation is a people who have made good the right to be a nation - not necessarily by force, but, according to our institutions, by proving overwhelmingly that we are not content to remain part of another state." (Hansard, vol 922, col. 1819).

The Ulster issue is then "to decide who we are, to establish or re-establish our identity as a nation." (Powell, 1972, p. 177). The majority in Northern Ireland consider themselves to be an integral part of Great Britain rather than a separate nation. The province is British because the majority of the people regard themselves as such. The IRA are the enemies of this claim to nationality and their defeat is essential if the British nation is to prove itself concerned with the protection of its own identity. Powell recognizes that a sense of nationhood becomes more acute when its basis is challenged by an enemy whether external or internal, hence his



verbal assaults on the IRA, the lethargic British government (especially after government meetings with IRA representatives in the mid 1970s) and the immigrant "enemy within". The Unionist assertion that they are British entitles them to play a full role in the British nation and be fully integrated into the British nation-state rather than being isolated and denied their rights to a say in decision-making. It is this assertion of British nationality which linked the Ulster Unionists to the Conservative Party and saw Powell elected as Official Unionist MP for Down South after his resignation from the Conservatives in 1974. The Unionists' break from the parliamentary Conservative Party was welcomed by Powell as he believed that the Heath government had failed the people of Ulster by removing their democratic rights (with the ending of the Stormont parliament and imposition of direct rule) and offering only conditional support for the maintenance of the Union. His criticism escalated in the Thatcher era, with Powell claiming that the Conservative Party had reneged on its "national" role by signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement which he depicted as foisted upon the government by American pressure (Powell, 1991, pp. 507-510). He condemns the "conditional" nature of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland as proof that the British government no longer regards Ulster as its cause.

The 1976/7 parliamentary debates on devolution and the establishment of legislative assemblies in Scotland and Wales saw Powell fearful of its effects on the sovereignty of Westminster and the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom. He believed that the essence of the UK was parliament's exclusive power to make laws covering the whole country. He was critical of devolution proposals but argued that should Scottish and Welsh nationalism become irresistible, London could not stand in their way. He rejected Wilson's



description of Scotland and Wales as "political nations" which should not have the right to levy their own taxes, claiming that true nations had a right to self-government (Hansard, vol. 922, col. 1809-1820). Devolution indicated the general decline in British identity and the need to re-establish a viable sense of nationhood.

#### Immigration and National Identity.

For Powell, nationhood is defined both by subjective feelings of what sort of people the British are, and by the identification of alien threats to nationhood. Chief among the perceived threats to British identity is the "alien wedge" of New Commonwealth immigrants living in Britain. Powell's attacks on immigration established him as a populist politician, breaking with the liberal consensus on the management of race issues, and produced the first "ethnic-ideological" account of British national identity. Powellism was instrumental in fostering a climate in which ethnic minorities were seen as a problem, the prejudices of the white population were legitimized, and the concepts of race, culture and allegiance were fused in a populist account based on "common sense" desires to live with "people of one's own kind". Although Powell himself was careful to avoid using or defining the terms "race" and "culture", and was concerned with national identity rather than racial purity or superiority, his populist nationalism marked a racialization of the conservative concept of the nation and of British politics in general. An ethnically homogeneous nation was desirable because only it could secure common allegiance to a single sovereign, shared identity and a common idea of the national community. Such mysticism meant that

myths of empire were replaced by those of national homogeneity and parliamentary sovereignty.

Powell used forceful,emotive language to express his fears about race relations,calling for tough immigration laws and voluntary repatriation. <sup>3</sup> His Birmingham Speech of 20th April 1968 notoriously broke with the prevailing consensus on race relations,establishing Powell as the populist alternative and ending his chances of holding high office again.The emotive rhetoric of the Birmingham speech,including his unproven story of an old woman having excrement pushed through her letterbox by "wide-grinning piccaninnies",and his "river of blood" prophesy,broke with Conservative statements on the issue although Powell's proposals for a limit on immigration differed little from the official line.In the speech Powell claimed to be representing the "common sense" views of the average citizen, establishing his populist credentials and dressing his arguments in the rhetoric of common sense and legitimate concern.Common to his discourse on immigration is the "numbers game":the belief that the high birth rate of the existing New Commonwealth ethnic population would lead to large areas of the inner cities becoming exclusively black areas.Powell used figures on the immigration rate to give his forebodings a veneer of respectability,but the statistics on the size and integration of the ethnic minority population actually illustrated the impracticality of the repatriation option.

"The supreme function of statesmanship is to provide against preventable evils..We must be mad,literally mad,as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependents,who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population.It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre." (Powell,1969,p.281,283)



Powell's scare tactics continued with his premonition of "the River Tiber foaming with much blood",and his references to violent racial clashes in the United States.Powell subsequently argued that the 1971 Immigration Act did not deal with the problem because it failed to introduce voluntary repatriation to reduce the existing immigrant-based population of the inner cities.Integration of the existing ethnic population had for Powell proved to be impossible as they were an "alien wedge",unable to be integrated into British culture and the "British way of life".Nationhood is a subjective experience developed through immersion in the traditions and values of the national community.Immigrants are "alien" to the British way of life and the subjective experiences which make up "Britishness" so they can never be truly integrated into the national community or share the allegiance to nation,culture and sovereign present in the indigenous population.By 1980 Powell was warning that if immigrant communities made up one-third of the population of the major cities:

"England would be unlivable and ungovernable.It would not merely be inconceivable to us because of our past habits,it would be inconceivable in reality,and its inconceivability would be resolved in civil discord and violence." (Hansard,vol.980,p.1045).

Powell's emphasis on parliamentary sovereignty as a major factor in British national identity again works it way into his nationalist strategy. National homogeneity in political terms means common allegiance to the sovereign authority of the historical community. "Inside the nation you cannot contain elements which are foreign to it in the sense that they cannot share that devotion to the whole as against the parts" (Powell,1991, p.35). The ethnic minority populations of the inner cities are perceived in this light.They are not part of the British historical community and lack



the traditional values and allegiances of the British way of life. Membership of the nation becomes a matter of shared political values, an ethnic-ideological account stressing allegiance and loyalty which only naturally occur in the native population. Powell believes that allegiance or primary loyalty to the nation is the basis of citizenship, and called for a redefined British citizenship. He frequently talks of the willingness of the patriot to sacrifice himself for his nation, even claiming, when asked how he would like to be remembered, that "I should like to have been killed in the war" (1986 interview with Anne Brown, in Powell, 1991, p. 52). This devotion to the nation cannot for Powell ever be reciprocated by those from different cultures, brought up with different values, traditions and loyalties.

Implicit in Powell's political definition of national homogeneity as common allegiance to one sovereign body, lies a myth of cultural homogeneity and a perception that groups "alien" to the British political culture or "way of life" are a "problem", undermining national identity and unity. Immigration undermines the homogeneity of the British nation and makes the forging of a new national consciousness more difficult. Unity as a positive attribute of nationhood is joined by "difference" as a means of distinguishing that which is integral to Britishness from what is alien to it. Powell's belief in the continuity of the British nation and the importance of the past inevitably made him hostile to what he perceived as alien elements within the state, whether racial groups or left-wing intellectuals. Parekh links nationalist and assimilationist New Right strategies, but for Powell assimilation poses almost as many problems as integration (Parekh, 1990, b). Assimilationists argue that immigrants can only be part of the national community if they abandon any elements of their

identity which would be incompatible with Britishness. But Powell does not focus on culture explicitly: his belief is that separate identities mean separate loyalties, and these are deep-rooted. Powell and many on the Tory Right reject the possibility of a "black Englishman".

"The West Indian or Indian does not, by being born in England, become an Englishman. In law he becomes a United Kingdom citizen by birth; in fact he is a West Indian or an Asian still." (Speech at Eastbourne, 16th November 1968, quoted in Foot, 1969, p. 119).

Powell here argues that citizenship and nationality are distinct categories. Membership of the political community is not the same as membership of the national community. Immigrants can not be fully integrated or assimilated into the national community because they do not share the values and loyalties of the indigenous (ie white) population. Nationhood is based on ethnic-ideological factors: only the ethnically British have deep-rooted allegiance to national traditions, institutions and culture. Citizenship is only a legal category, but even here Powell argues that it should include vows of allegiance. But given that repatriation is not a realistic option and that many immigrants are British citizens and have become more fully integrated into British society (economically and through mixed marriages), Powellism is left floundering, lacking any viable alternative to the reality it chooses to ignore.

Powell though enjoyed significant popular support for his stance on the immigration issue, though as Schoen points out Powell's populist appeal was confined to this single issue (Schoen, 1977).<sup>4</sup> His campaign against EEC membership failed to ignite such intense popular support. Powell appeared as an alternative to the postwar consensus at a time of high levels of public



disillusionment, and he was able to mobilize people on the emotive issue of immigration, working on pre-existing fears. Powell's speeches on immigration and Tony Benn's subsequent attack on him are often seen as affecting the outcome of the 1970 election (Deakin & Bourne, 1970). His resignation from the Conservative Party and revelation that he would vote Labour because of their cautious attitude towards the EC, may also have been significant factors in the closely-fought February 1974 election.

#### British Citizenship.

Powell's concern with the revitalization of national identity coupled opposition to immigration with calls for the reform of citizenship laws. Before 1948, according to Powell, British nationality was based on allegiance to the Crown: "allegiance is the very essence of nationhood..Nationhood means that a man stands to one nation, to one loyalty, above all others." (Hansard, vol.997, p.967). Allegiance falls within the parameters of nationality by birth or "ius soli". However the 1948 British Nationality Act altered the basis of nationality, establishing nine separate citizenships plus a citizenship of "the United Kingdom and its Colonies". This was a fictional entity and failed to base the rights and duties of nationality upon citizenship or membership of one sovereign nation-state. In his speech on the 1953 Royal Titles Bill, Powell criticized the removal of the word "British" from the monarch's title and its replacement by the "meaningless" terms "Commonwealth" and "Realms" (Hansard, vol.512, cols.240-248).



Powell criticized the Thatcher government's 1981 British Nationality Bill for sticking with "rag-bag principles" of citizenship and nationality. Its definition of British citizenship continued to ignore concepts of rights, duty and allegiance which Powell regarded as the time-honoured bases of British subject status. The 1981 Bill proposed a combination of "ius soli" (citizenship by virtue of birth within the sovereign territory) and "ius sanguinis" (citizenship by virtue of one's blood or parents). Thus, a British citizen would be someone born to a British citizen, but with the qualification that the parent was settled in the UK at the time of his/her birth. Powell argued that this created problems of dual nationality and thus of allegiance. On the Hong Kong question in 1985, Powell was critical of British nationality laws and proposals to grant British citizenship without automatic right of abode. For Powell the failure to produce a coherent concept of British citizenship in the 1940s was a root cause of the immigration and nationality problems which emerged in the 1960s (Powell, 1988, b). He believes that British citizenship does not automatically confer membership of the national community on a person. Nationhood is a complex of subjective feelings of loyalty and identity which Powell suggests are only found in the historical ethnic community (ie the white population of Britain).

## Summary and Conclusions.

Powell is the most clearly identifiable conservative nationalist of the post-war era, presenting a theoretical account of British nationhood and interpreting important political issues in terms of a quest for a redefined national identity. For a time in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Powellism was a politically significant, populist nationalism, coupling crude and emotive appeals for an end to immigration with a rigourously-defined, intellectual concept of the nation. As a nationalist strategy, Powellism had some success in linking together a number of policy areas under a populist umbrella, but his ability in putting together a nationalist package was not mirrored in the wider political arena. Powell's status as spokesman for a popular conservative nationalism was shortlived, with his popularity tied to his hardline views on immigration. Powell himself regards the fight against EC intrusion into British sovereignty as the most important plank of his nationalist strategy, but in this respect his record is largely one of failure to prevent further integration or persuade the British people of the negative implications of EC membership.

Ultimately, the Powellite nationalist strategy has to be judged as a failure because it was inappropriate to the politics of the Conservative party and to the realities of governing a multi-ethnic society. Powellism was an oppositional strategy which, like the nationalism of the Edwardian Right, emerged at a time of popular dissatisfaction and internal disputes about policy direction in the Conservative Party. Its brand of populist rhetoric and ideological politics was incompatible with the moderate and pragmatic politics needed to govern a plural society. Although some of

Powell's proposals on immigration were not far removed from the official leadership position, his break with the cautious management encouraged by the dual party consensus on race politics ensured his isolation from effective decision-making. His laissez-faire economics and position as unofficial leader of backbench revolts on British membership of the EC maintained his maverick role in the Conservative Party, though for may he appeared the most likely alternative to Heath's leadership. The language of Powellism was at best impolitic, at worst inflammatory and explicitly racist, dividing society into native and "alien" groupings, legitimizing the prejudices of the former and depicting the latter as a threat to the nation.

Powellism recognized the need for a redefined sense of British national identity which would reflect Britain's changed world role and changes in British society. Its most useful contribution to the conservative nation was its exposure of the damaging nature of myths of imperial and economic might, but Powellism is fundamentally flawed because of its espousal of damaging myths of isolationism and national homogeneity. Though Powell draws on conservative themes of organicism, tradition, community and identity, his nationalist strategy is divisive and extremist. His focus on the parliamentary character of British political culture is undermined by his belief that sovereignty is an absolute which is best safeguarded through vigorous isolationism. But Powellite nationalism's most damaging diversion from the moderate conservative nation was its stance on the politics of race. Powellism fostered a climate in which prejudice was legitimized (through the "numbers game" or appeals to "common sense" and the universal desire in human nature to live with "those of one's own kind"), ethnic



minority communities were depicted as "alien" and unwelcome, and references to cultural difference were transformed into statements on race relations. Though careful to avoid explicit references to "race", Powell's belief that national homogeneity is required for a shared idea of the nation and common loyalty to a single sovereign authority, is implicitly equated with an ethnic-ideological definition of nationhood in which only the indigenous ethnic population, imbued with traditional values and loyalties, are full members of the national community. The populist nature of his nationalism also means that the legitimate prejudices of the majority population should be taken into account when deciding the membership of the nation. The desire to live with "people of one's own kind" produces a situation in which the native population reject immigration, thus exercising their right to decide the make-up of the national community. Powell's calls for repatriation and rejection of the integrationist option illustrate the racist nature of his nationalist strategy, and its unsuitability to a plural society in which many "immigrants" are British citizens and integrated into British society.

Although Powellism is fundamentally flawed both as a redefinition of the conservative concept of the nation and as a nationalist strategy, its influence on Conservative politics has been considerable. Thatcherism's doctrinal blend of free-market and authoritarian politics has clearly drawn on Powellism, while the populist nature of its approach to the politics of race is also a legacy of Powell. However, Thatcherism had to react to issue from a governmental standpoint, something which Powell's essentially oppositional nationalist strategy had to do, hence differences between the two on repatriation, citizenship, Ulster and British membership of the EC. Powell himself has been critical of Thatcher for not developing her gut

nationalism into a coherent strategy, betraying her concern for the nation by keeping Britain inside an EC fast moving towards further integration, and by signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Yet although significant differences of policy exist between the two, it is undeniable that Thatcherism's revival of the language of nationhood owes much to the message and impact of Powell's populist nationalism.

Footnotes:

1. The best biographies of Powell are Andrew Roth: *Enoch Powell: Tory Tribune*. Macdonald, London, 1970; Roy Lewis: *Enoch Powell: Principle in Politics*. Casell, London, 1979 and Patrick Cosgrave: *The Lives of Enoch Powell*. Bodley Head, London, 1989.
2. See Norton (1978), who notes that Powell voted against the government on 80 occasions during the passage of the European Communities Act.
3. Prior to 1968, Powell called for immigration controls but took a more liberal line on integration. On his early views and turn to immigration see Foot (1969), ch.2. and Schoen (1977), ch.2.
4. Schoen notes the rise in working-class support for Powell after his "rivers of blood" speech, but shows that his views had cross-class appeal with three-quarters of the electorate backing his views in 1968 (Schoen, 1977, ch.8).

## CHAPTER FIVE: THATCHERISM AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONHOOD.

The first part of this thesis argued that historically, British conservatism has developed a distinctive concept of the nation, based on values of tradition, organic change, community and hierarchy. This conservative nation can be seen, in different guises, in the works of conservative thinkers from Burke to Scruton. It has also taken on considerable political and electoral importance when utilized by the Conservative Party, the most important forum in which conservative ideas are translated into political strategy. Party policy is necessarily more flexible than political doctrine would suggest as it is closely tied to the realities of electoral competition, political limitation and changing circumstance. From the time of Disraeli, the Conservative Party has used the themes of the conservative nation to gain political support and act as a national-integrative rather than sectional party. But political realities have often prevented the themes of the conservative nation being translated into coherent policy strategy. This chapter will assess the extent to which Thatcherism has utilized the themes of the conservative nation and developed a politics of nationhood.

In the late 1960s two alternative "national strategies" were available to the Conservative Party, one pragmatic, the other ideological.

(1) An integrative "one nation" strategy in which the Conservative Party aims to bring social cohesion and consensus, thus minimizing the effects of class and territorial divisions within the nation-state. This national strategy is ideologically weak, lacking a coherent nationalist agenda or



course of action. Policies are arrived at pragmatically: conservative values are important but are guided by considerations of electoral competition and the need for strong government. The Conservative Party is presented as the national party, seeking national unity rather than representing sectional interests. The party's traditional support for national institutions together with its patriotic image and rhetoric are electorally important in persuading voters that the party is best placed to act for the interests of the nation as a whole. This has been the dominant national strategy of the Conservative Party, as espoused by Disraeli and Baldwin, but was severely weakened by the crisis of one nation conservatism in the late 1960s.

(ii) A nationalist strategy in which a coherent concept of the nation and its interests determines policies in the wider political arena. Here, the Conservative Party claims to be the national party because it has a well-developed theory of who constitutes the nation and what courses of action should be taken to defend its political independence, unity and sense of identity. It is predominantly ideological rather than pragmatic or electoral in its orientation. In a largely non-ideological party such as the British Conservatives, this nationalist strategy is rare and usually espoused by internal opposition rather than the party leadership. Considerations of statecraft tend to override those of doctrinal clarity, but nationalist strategies have been adopted on the Conservative Right at times of crisis or national redefinition. The most significant recent manifestation of a nationalist strategy within the Conservative Party was Powellism, which sought to replace the consensual middle way conservatism of the 1960s with a conservative strategy based on the reassertion of national identity and

self-government. An earlier nationalist strategy arose in the early part of the 20th century on the "Diehard" imperialist wing of the party.

This chapter argues that Thatcherism has marked a move away from the integrative "one nation" strategy of past Conservative governments. However it has not been able to formulate or implement an alternative ideological account of nationhood. My concern is with Thatcherism's "politics of nationhood" ie those areas of doctrine and policy concerned with defining and protecting national identity. The scope of a "politics of nationhood" thus covers doctrinal expressions of nationhood (outlining the key features of the national community) and government policy in areas which are identified as crucial to national identity and interests (eg the Union, relations with the EC and race politics). In assessing Thatcherism's relationship to a politics of nationhood, I will draw on three main areas of analysis used by political scientists. These interpretations are: (a) the personal values of Margaret Thatcher; (b) the tensions between ideas of the nation in the free market and strong state strands of Thatcherism as a political doctrine; (c) the more pragmatic elements of Thatcherite statecraft and issue management, particularly in the areas of social and territorial cohesion, race and policy on Europe. Taken individually, these areas of analysis are useful in assessing the concept of the nation employed by Thatcherism and its application in particular policy areas. However, for an overall account of Thatcherism's politics of nationhood it is best to use all three approaches simultaneously, recognizing the shortcomings of each of them to build a clearer overall picture. First though I will examine the environment in which Thatcherism and its ideas of the nation evolved.



By the late 1970s, the Conservative "one nation" strategy and the values of the conservative nation were being undermined by developments within the British state and in the wider international arena. Within the Conservative Party itself, the earlier middle way strategy of Macmillan and Butler was losing support. Heath's "Selsdon Man" period marked a shift to the Right on economic and social affairs, but the impetus was lost by the 1972 U-turn. Heath's return to policies of government intervention stiffened the resolve of neo-liberals like Sir Keith Joseph. Thatcher's leadership election victory was won despite the lack of a sizeable neo-liberal faction, and despite concern about the political bankruptcy of the "middle way", the majority of the party never became converts to Thatcherite doctrine (Norton, 1990).<sup>1</sup> For the Conservative Party, Thatcher brought a new leadership style and a populist ideology merging economic liberalism and traditional Tory morality.

Thatcherism promised an end to economic decline, a restoration of law, order and traditional values, a reduced role for the state and a revival of pride in British nationhood. It identified the failings of collectivism and the "one nation" strategy, but was unable or unwilling to produce a coherent national strategy or politics of nationhood. The British state and national identity were under threat in the political environment from which Thatcherism emerged. Sub-state nationalisms in Wales and Scotland plus the crisis of authority in Northern Ireland threatened the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom. Thatcherism inherited a Conservative Party without a clear national strategy. The short-term decline of the devolution issue after the 1979 referendums in Scotland and Wales gave the new government a



respite from having to review the Conservatives commitment to Union, but the issue would rise again in the late 1980s.

On European issues, the Conservatives had long supported closer links with the continent, though an isolationist rump continued to voice its opposition. The Heath government had negotiated British membership a decade after Macmillan had first sought it. The 1975 referendum on EC membership answered those critics within the party who claimed that Heath had acted without a specific electoral mandate. However, the first Thatcher government inherited a number of problems arising from Community arrangements structured without reference to British interests or traditions.

Conservatives were also concerned by what they saw as problems of race relations and immigration. Immigration controls had been tightened in the early 1970s, but racial tensions were a worrying feature of British politics, particularly as electoral support for the racist National Front grew. The first Thatcher government was placed in the difficult position of on the one hand, seeking to improve race relations, and on the other, addressing fears of the Conservative Right and general public about immigration.

National identity, community feeling and social cohesion were all under strain in 1970s Britain. Thatcherism blamed British economic woes and the decline in patriotism, civic values and national identity on too much state intervention and on corporatist economic relations. Since the end of empire, Britain's world role had been unclear, while domestically national unity, authority, morality and patriotism were no longer respected values.

In subsequent chapters I will examine Thatcherism's approach to relations with the EC and to the management of race relations in a plural society. The rest of this chapter focuses on Thatcherism and the politics of nationhood in more general terms, looking at Thatcher's personal nationalism, Thatcherism as political doctrine and Thatcherism as statecraft.

#### Thatcherism as Mrs Thatcher's Personal Values.

The most simplistic account of Thatcherism claims that it is little more than a collection of English middle class values and prejudices, as expressed by the personal beliefs of Margaret Thatcher herself. Peter Riddell claims that:

"Thatcherism is essentially an instinct, a series of moral values and an approach to leadership rather than an ideology. It is an expression of Mrs Thatcher's upbringing in Grantham, her background of hard work and family responsibility, ambition and postponed satisfaction, duty and patriotism." (Riddell, 1983, p.7).

Alan O'Shea's account of Thatcherism also focuses on the values and beliefs of Thatcher herself (O'Shea, 1984). He draws on her speeches to illustrate his thesis that Thatcherite nationalism emerges from Thatcher's populist (ie anti-statist) rhetoric in which "the people" are seen as individuals linked by their membership of a historic national community.

This mode of analysis emphasizes the role of Margaret Thatcher, arguing that the major themes and policies of the Thatcher era are best understood by reference to its leading figure. It stresses her leadership style and

conviction politics, but ignores the constraints of office, party and circumstance which limit any leader's scope for action and conspired to bring about Thatcher's downfall. Accounts of Thatcherism's importance for British politics and conservative thought cannot be undertaken solely from this perspective. The study of Thatcherism must involve more than political journalism or biography in order to reflect the large number of inputs in the policy making environment and the constraints on leadership. But Thatcher's own style and beliefs are important to an account of Thatcherism and the politics of nationhood because her instinctive nationalism has often been politically significant. She was never the guiding intellectual force behind the doctrine which took her name, but because of her position as Prime Minister and style as a "conviction politician", Thatcher's own values take on extra significance. Thus her instinctive English nationalism reintroduced the language of nationhood into the political arena even though it lacked the theoretical coherence of Powellism. Although her views do not make up a consistent concept of the nation, they were politically significant on European issues and during the Falklands War.

Mrs Thatcher's speeches often draw on her personal values: the moral superiority of the free society, the importance of traditional values and the need to restore patriotism and Britain's world role. As early as 1968 she was emphasizing the now recognizably Thatcherite themes of the detrimental effect the over-extended state had on personal responsibility (Thatcher, 1968). Her early speeches as Conservative leader raised the same themes of reducing the role of the state and allowing the free market to aid individual self-government. A healthy nation needs responsible individuals because "the virtue of a nation is only as great as the virtue of the



individuals who compose it" (1981 in Thatcher,1989,p.122). Self-regard is not,for Thatcher, antithetical to communal feelings,but is its foundation.

"There is not and cannot be any hard-and-fast antithesis between self-interest and care for others,for man is a social creature,born into family,clan,community,nation, brought up in mutual self-dependence." (1977 in Thatcher,1989,p.53).

Socialism and the interventionist state are blamed for the decline of the traditional Tory values of patriotism, social cohesion and national pride.The healthy society,according to a speech in Liverpool in 1976, requires the three "complementary ideals" of personal responsibility, membership of a community and family-life.The socialist state undermines personal responsibility and independence which in turn reduces communal confidence and solidarity.The Conservative Party represents traditional values and institutions which help provide social cohesion.

Among the most revealing of Margaret Thatcher's speeches are those in which she addresses herself to the relationship between religion (more specifically her own Methodist values) and politics.In a 1981 speech at St Lawrence Jewry in the City of London she spoke at length about the religious basis of British national character.Here Thatcher claimed that "the concept of the nation is at the heart of Old Testament Judaism" (in Thatcher,1989,p.123) but is crucially linked to the theme of individual moral responsibility.Nations are "enlarged families" binding their members together through mutual dependence and common customs.British national character derives its morality from the twin Christian ideals of personal responsibility and commitment to social welfare.As Christian values and traditional moral values come under threat,social solidarity and the sense

of "national purpose" are undermined. There is then a close relationship between traditional Christian values, patriotism and the health of the national community.

Mrs Thatcher returned to the subject of the links between religion and politics in her controversial 1988 "Sermon on the Mount" speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. Again she stressed the central role of individual moral responsibility, arguing that Christian ethics state that a man has a moral duty to work and use his talents, but must not covet wealth or seek to make money for its own sake (in Thatcher, 1989, p. 252).<sup>2</sup> The state must should seek to relieve hardship and provide education plus basic social services, but must not undermine individual responsibility. Thatcher continued to emphasize the Christian basis of national character, quoting from the hymn "I vow to thee my country" to illustrate this.

The moral values of Margaret Thatcher emphasize the importance of individual responsibility and national cohesion. Thatcher's instinctive nationalism is based on these values and has been developed in her attitudes towards European integration. From the 1987 Bruges speech onwards, she has outlined her belief in the continued strength and importance of national identity and national self-government. Her speeches on Europe contain the familiar Thatcherite values of free enterprise and the need to limit the sphere of state and bureaucratic activity. A detailed account of Thatcher's views on European integration can be found in Chapter Seven, but it is important at this stage to note that her own nationalism or



account of the nation is instinctive rather than philosophical, drawn from personal values and experiences.

Mrs Thatcher's views on the politics of race and immigration again appear to fit a pattern of instinctive English nationalism. Her infamous "swamping" statement in 1978 led to claims that she is racially prejudiced. This may be overstated, but her background and experiences make it likely that she is unable to empathize with disadvantaged groups in society. Her own commitment to English traditions and customs produce an unsympathetic attitude towards groups critical of British society and culture. But this emphasis on self-reliance and family values accords with Jewish and Asian traditions (see Chapter Eight).

During the Falklands War of 1982 Thatcher adopted a more overtly nationalist rhetoric. Of more interest than her views on the Argentinian claim to and invasion of the Falkland Islands are her speeches which point to the domestic relevance of the conflict. Thatcher clearly regarded the victory of British forces in the South Atlantic as symbolic of a revival of British esteem and patriotism. In a speech to a Conservative rally in Cheltenham shortly after the conclusion of hostilities, Thatcher noted the mood of patriotic fervour which had swept the country.

"The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed and that this nation still has those sterling qualities which shine through our history. We have to see that the spirit of the South Atlantic - the real spirit of Britain - is kindled not only by war but can now be fired by peace. The faltering and self-doubt has now given way to achievement and pride. We have the confidence and we must use it."



The Falklands conflict revived the latent patriotism which had been damaged by the crisis of confidence and identity produced by 1970s style corporatism. For Thatcher, this was highly significant and was used by her as a stick with which to beat the unpatriotic "enemies within" who acted to undermine British confidence, cohesion and prosperity.

Thatcher called herself an "instinctive Unionist", but her decision to sign the Anglo-Irish Agreement undermines this claim. In Scotland, she is widely regarded as "anti-Scottish" and as an English nationalist. In speeches to Scottish Conservatives, Mrs Thatcher repeatedly stressed her support for the Union and claimed that "the Scots invented Thatcherism long before I was thought of" (1988, in Thatcher, 1989, p.236). Here she looked to the Scottish economists and philosophers Smith, Hume and Ferguson as the originators of theories of the free society and individualism. However Scottish critics have argued that Mrs Thatcher was out of touch with Scottish opinion, maintaining an overtly Unionist position at a time of general disenchantment with existing constitutional arrangements (Kendrick and McCrone, 1989, p.602).

Mrs Thatcher's personal values and background then provide a useful building block with which to start constructing an account of Thatcherism and the nation. Her personal patriotism and opposition to threats to national identity and cohesion, whether from European federalists, sub-state nationalists or "enemies within", illustrate Mrs Thatcher's instinctive English nationalism. This differs qualitatively from the coherent and ideological account of nationhood upon which Enoch Powell built his politics of the nation. Thatcherism though is far more than the values and

beliefs of any one person, no matter how central she is to the character and policies of the Thatcher governments. It is doctrinally well-developed when compared with previous Conservative strategies, drawing on New Right thinking and traditional Tory attitudes.<sup>3</sup> The doctrinal elements of Thatcherism contain much of relevance to ideas of nationhood, but also reveal the tensions and inconsistencies within Thatcherism which undermine claims that Thatcherism is hegemonic or ideologically nationalist.

#### Thatcherism as Political Doctrine: The Free Market.

As a political doctrine, Thatcherism fuses two long-established strands of British conservative thought in an uneasy alliance: a neo-liberal emphasis on individual freedom and the capitalist market, and a more authoritarian focus on national cohesion, traditional moral values and common culture (Gamble, 1988). The radical-populist character of Thatcherite doctrine stems from its fusion of the two traditions and their application to contemporary problems. For the Conservative Party, Thatcherism marks a shift away from a pragmatic, consensual style to an ideological politics which alienated many "one nation" Tories. In their accounts of nationhood, these two doctrinal elements often sit uneasily together, undermining claims that Thatcherism is ideologically nationalist or potentially hegemonic.

The neo-liberal elements of Thatcherism have been most clearly developed in attitudes towards reducing the role of the state in economic and social affairs, thereby increasing individual responsibility and freedom within a free market system. In this sense Thatcherism draws on and develops some of the themes inherent in the political definition of the



nation examined in Chapter One of this thesis. This political nation adopts an account of politics and identity located at individual rather than group level. Its dominant themes are those of sovereignty, citizenship, the limited state and individual freedom and all of these have been championed, and in some cases redefined, by Thatcherism. Monetarism provided Thatcherism's initial doctrinal response to economic decline, challenging Keynesian commitments to full employment, government intervention and corporatism. Thatcherite economics stressed control of the money supply and floating currency levels, but strict monetarism was gradually replaced by anti-inflationary policies, the control of interest rates, financial deregulation and the privatization of state-owned industries. Competition within the free market and wider share ownership were encouraged as ways of reviving individual responsibility and initiative.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of the social or welfare functions of the state, Thatcherism again redefined the relationship between individual and state. The new relationship between the two produced a reduction of the "social citizenship rights" of the individual (Oliver, 1991; Ignatieff, 1989). Thatcherism extended economic citizen rights, but reduced social citizenship ones. The individual is treated as a consumer or as an economic unit acting in the free market. This stipulates a limited role for the state in economic affairs, reserving the market as the sphere in which individual autonomy is realized. The citizen has legal and political rights, but social citizenship ideas of welfare entitlement are viewed as detrimental to individual responsibility, freedom and economic efficiency. Thus Ignatieff claims that:

"The political counter-revolution that brought Margaret Thatcher to power..can be understood as an attack on the citizenship of equal



entitlement in post-war liberal democratic society..The citizenship of shared entitlement came to be understood in the conservative thought of the late 1970s as a coercive bargain between strangers which abridged the liberties of both rich and poor while infantilising the poor." (Ignatieff,1989,p.63).

The individualist methodology at the heart of Thatcherite neo-liberalism regarded theories of community and society (from both left and right) as threats to individual autonomy,undermining individual freedom with their ideas of the common good or social unity.This interpretation regards the nation as little more than a collection of strangers:sovereign individuals coming together in economic transactions,to maintain the legal system or organize defence against external threats.Thatcher thus claimed that "there is no such thing as society,only individuals and their families".<sup>5</sup>

Thatcherism's free market economics then emphasize the individual at the expense of the community and look to a market-based legal citizenship rather than an entitlement-based social citizenship.Neo-liberalism offers an internationalist doctrine of free trade and world interdependence rather than a protectionist economic nationalism.The British economy has become "multi-nationalized" for the state has not acted to prevent the penetration of foreign capital into the economy,even at the expense of British industrial interests.The Thatcher governments' lifted exchange controls, encouraged the development of the European Single Market and sold shares in newly-privatised industries to foreign investors.Thatcherism encouraged international free trade,seeing the economy as part of a wider world market (free from protectionism ideally) in which British financial interests and

particularly a deregulated City of London would play a leading role and where streamlined British industry could compete across national frontiers.

The freeing of market forces and the internationalist outlook of Thatcherite economics aimed to bring national prosperity and regeneration within the world economy. The driving force behind this economic recovery are representatives of the British financial and industrial sectors whose entrepreneurial talents ultimately benefit the wider society. As in previous manifestations of conservatism, a particular section of society (in each case a talented elite or minority) represent the interests and values of the nation. Their actions both benefit themselves as individuals and increase the prosperity and opportunities of others. But it is not a truly "national class", being internationalist in outlook with its arena of action extending beyond the domestic economy. Economic interdependence and internationalism mean that, unless a protectionist system exists, financial and industrial sectors cannot be merely national in their outlook or values. Thatcherism cannot be reduced to an expression of particular or homogeneous interests within the British economy, either financial or industrial. Its doctrine merely seeks to create the conditions in which efficient and competitive elements can prosper within the domestic market and in the wider economy, bringing national recovery.

Thatcherism's view of individuals as sovereign economic units within a free market economy, and its opposition to an interventionist role for the state in economic affairs has produced a strategy fundamentally different from its predecessors. This "one nation" strategy valued national unity, cohesion and consensus and sought to bring it about through a mixed



economy and welfare state. It was essentially integrative, whereas Thatcherite doctrine and policies have been "de-integrative" in that national unity and consensus are not valued as ends in themselves. Instead, individual freedom of action within the competitive market economy is valued above communal unity or social cohesion (Krieger, 1986). The free market's competitive nature inevitably creates divisions between the successful (or lucky) and the unsuccessful or disadvantaged. Thatcherism has meant that divisions between "haves" and "have-nots" are exacerbated as social citizenship rights are reduced. Jessop argues that this has amounted to a "two-nations strategy" in which the gulf between rich and poor widens as Thatcherism rewards the productive elements in society and looks to them as its electoral base (Jessop et al, 1989). The nation is territorially divided as well: the economic gap between the modernizing South and the old-industrial North has widened (Smith, 1989). Thatcherism's outlook is shaped by the values of its major constituency, the South East of England. Electorally, it does not need to pick up many parliamentary seats in the areas suffering most from industrial decline (Gamble, 1988, p. 214).<sup>6</sup> The growing divide within the national community has undermined Conservatism's traditional relationship with Unionism, while in terms of the politics of race, this de-integrative or divisive trend is continued through the marginalization of some ethnic minority groups.

From the neo-liberal wing of Thatcherite political doctrine arises a redefined concept of the nation in which central themes of individualism and economic internationalism contrast with the integrative strategy of "one nation" conservatism. However, these elements in Thatcherism were often subordinated to an alternative view of nationhood based on traditional Tory



values of community, order and state authority. This is its traditionalist, strong state branch, but the relationship between the two branches is often a tense one, hindering the development of a coherent concept of the nation.

#### Thatcherism as Political Doctrine: The Strong State.

The strong state branch of Thatcherite doctrine draws on Tory themes of authority, social order and traditional moral values, all of which are regarded as essential for national unity and identity. In economic affairs, Thatcherism demands a reduced role for the state and a greater role for individuals acting in the free market. In political terms though the state has had to become actively involved in creating the conditions in which a market economy can flourish. The authority of the state in relation to economic and sectional interests in civil society has been strengthened through centralization and the weakening of alternative power centres (eg trade unions and local government). Only by weakening corporatist power structures and extending the power of the centre were the Thatcher governments able to free market forces (Gamble, 1988).

The traditionalist or strong state approach is a more identifiably conservative account of nationhood than the individualist neo-liberal element within Thatcherite doctrine. This is particularly true for ideas of community and social cohesion. For the neo-liberals, society is little more than a collection of separate, sovereign individuals coming together voluntarily in the marketplace. For the traditionalists, the individual is a social creature, his outlook and interests shaped by the community and

culture in which he is raised. Society is valued because it brings communal cohesion and shared identity, not because it represents an arena for economic transactions. State authority plays a crucial part in holding society together and provides a focus of loyalty and identity. Tory collectivists argued that the state ought to provide welfare services to ensure national unity and prevent a dangerously wide gap between rich and poor. Though Thatcherism recognises that the state should ensure that nobody falls below a social minimum and thus into destitution, the paramount importance of both economic efficiency and individual responsibility dictate that state intervention should not be structured along the lines of an "end-state" view of the just society or the need for national unity.

The traditionalist branch had to cede predominance to the neo-liberal branch of Thatcherism on economic issues, but had the upper hand in areas of law and morality. Individual freedom was encouraged in the economic marketplace, but traditional moral and cultural values must be protected. There was to be no free market of lifestyles or moral values as this would produce permissiveness, a weakening of social order and a crisis of national culture and identity.<sup>7</sup> Traditional Tory and Christian values were placed at the heart of the British way of life and were to be upheld in face of threats from radical elements, whether they are libertarian or socialist. The development of an ethnically plural society was also perceived as a danger to national identity and traditional British values. The state was to have ultimate authority in these areas of community life, resulting in a hardline approach to immigration and against other disruptive elements (the "enemy within").



This manifestation of the Thatcherite concept of nationhood builds on the values of community, authority and a national identity supported by the state, but extends them along more blatantly exclusivist or ideological grounds. Thatcherism's nation appears to be little more than those upholding traditional values and the British way of life and accepting the Thatcherite doctrine of free market and strong state. The potential for pluralism in the conservative nation, where divisions exist but are tempered by community, consensus and shared identity is neglected. Instead society is divided, ideologically at least, between the productive and traditionalist on the one hand, and the economically or socially unproductive plus cultural minorities on the other. So while free market ideology allows economic divides to widen by rejecting large scale state-led redistribution, the strong state line more actively marginalizes society along ideological and cultural lines, continuing the de-integrative trend inherent in the Thatcherite interpretation of nationhood.

Although, the "de-integrative" nature of the Thatcherite nation meant that the "one nation" strategy of social cohesion and consensus was demoted, the exclusivist trend within Thatcherism is not absolute. The economically unproductive and ethnic minorities are not permanently excluded from the Thatcherite ideal nation. The national community is not a closed shop: its boundaries are open to those showing productive vigour or ideological attachment to Thatcherite values. The politics of race followed by the Thatcher governments does not define nationhood solely in ethnic terms, but in terms of British identity, culture and loyalties. But integration often requires the abandonment of ethnic identities which clash with the Thatcherite interpretation of British values.



The traditionalist element within Thatcherism sees the individual as more than an economic unit, extending the concept of citizenship beyond neo-liberalism's reductionist individualism. The citizen in the traditionalist account is linked to the state through civic solidarity, communal identity, and shared obligation. The concept of "active citizenship" developed in Conservative circles from the time of Douglas Hurd's address to the 1988 Conservative Conference, developing into a key theme of John Major's premiership with the production of the Citizen's Charter. Hurd's idea of "active citizenship" emphasized links between citizen, civil society and the state. Individuals were not seen as atomistic but as members of different communities, with the family the most important. Voluntary activities would bridge the gap between state and individual. Welfare provision was to be a partnership between public provision and private provision (through charities and voluntary work in the community). On law and order, individual citizens were to be encouraged to take an active concern in their local community through neighbourhood watch schemes and liaisons with local police. Education was also a major area: here the emphasis would be on the teaching of civic virtue, educating children in the duties and obligations of citizenship. As Education Secretary, John MacGregor stated that schools should cover three core aspects of citizenship: (i) individual rights and responsibilities; (ii) the organization and structure of society, and (iii) the role and obligations of citizens in society (Heater, 1991, p. 149).

This "active citizenship" developed in the last couple of years of the Thatcher governments and in the Major premiership, ironing out the harsh edges of Thatcherite individualism. However, its outlook is still rooted in a market framework where individuals are located as consumers or property-

owners. The "obligations" of citizenship are essentially voluntary and apolitical. Social citizenship rights do not figure in this approach: it is not a Tory collectivist strategy but an attempt at redress of grievances under which individuals can expect higher standards of public service.

For neo-liberals the workings of the free market must take place within a framework of constitutionalism under the rule of law. As noted above, a high level of state intervention and centralization was required to bring about the conditions under which a free market approach could replace a corporatist one. The focus on state authority in the traditionalist aspect of Thatcherism saw the role of the state increase to a level at which the minimal constitutional arrangements demanded by neo-liberals have been threatened. State intervention may have been reduced through privatization, but the autonomy of local authorities was also weakened, notably in financial affairs and education. The National Curriculum boosted the role of the state in education and allowed Thatcherism to influence the teaching of subjects such as history which are crucial in shaping perceptions of identity (Kaye, 1987). Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph commented that:

"History is indispensable to understanding the society we live in; to an awareness by pupils of the place of themselves, their families and communities in the developing story of the nation." Joseph, 1984).

Joseph emphasized the "national" element of history and its importance in furthering the shared British values of liberty and parliamentary democracy. However in seeking to impose its own vision of British history and its favoured traditional style of history teaching, Thatcherism further politicized British history and the interpretation of the past. Rhetorically,



Thatcherism popularized its own (Whig) version of British history, focusing on the benefits of the free market society, on national greatness, and on conservative morality. The Swann Report recommended the development of shared values and identity, but Thatcherism was critical of multi-cultural education. Its commitment to greater parental choice opened up the possibility of white parents removing their children from schools predominantly made up of ethnic minority children (see pp.297-299).

The strong state emphasis on order, stability and authority was used to justify the continued encroachment of the state into civil society. Civil liberties were threatened as Thatcherism brought "creeping authoritarianism" (Bogdanor, 1989). Thatcherism stressed the British tradition of parliamentary sovereignty (the self-government of the British people) in opposition to European centralism, but itself impinged on the powers of parliament to check the executive. Increased government and prime ministerial dominance over the legislature reduced the accountability of government, and the alternative centres of power were undermined. The "active citizen" then exists within a structure where individual participation is valued in the market place, but not in the political arena.

The doctrinal approach is important for the analysis of Thatcherism, for it illustrates the lack of theoretical coherence at its core. Thatcherism is a hybrid of two distinct doctrinal strands, the neo-liberal and authoritarian, which do not gel together easily. It does not have a single, unilinear doctrinal identity, but is rather best seen as an example of uneasy ideological cross-fertilization. Thatcherism's doctrinal approach to the politics of nationhood shows the tensions between a neo-liberal emphasis on



the unencumbered individual and the authoritarian stress on the communal roots of individual identity.

Inherent in a solely doctrinal analysis of Thatcherism is the danger of exaggerating the coherence of Thatcherite doctrine or underestimating the limitations posed by political and electoral factors. Stuart Hall's Gramscian analysis of Thatcherism as "authoritarian populism" argues that Thatcherism has fused free-market economics and social authoritarian attitudes into a major ideological force (Hall, 1988). As an "authoritarian populist" strategy it mobilizes popular support behind populist Right-wing themes (eg law and order, nationalism and economic liberty), enabling the construction of a new anti-collectivist hegemony to replace the Keynesian welfarist consensus. Thatcherism thus fuses both the demands of those in power for the restoration of the authority of the state with populist appeals eg for strict immigration controls and curbs on trade union powers, mobilizing support for a coherent authoritarian project.

Hall's analysis though places an undue stress on the doctrinal dimensions of Thatcherism, granting it an ideological coherence and uniformity which it lacked in practice. Jessop rejects Hall's "ideologism", arguing that Thatcherism was not a hegemonic project, but rather disparate coalition of interests and populist appeals. Thus Thatcherism's commitment to monetarist economics was a significant break with the Keynesian consensus but strict monetarism was short-lived, undermined by strategic problems and the limitations imposed by the need for successful, flexible political management. Hall's analysis of Thatcherism as a hegemonic project is inconsistent with its failure to fundamentally alter public attitudes on

the structure of the welfare state. Thatcherite values were more successfully disseminated in policy areas such as immigration, law and order, privatization and trade union reforms. Popular support for Thatcherism's approach to the politics of nationhood reached a peak in the Falklands War and evident in the reaction to Thatcher's claim that immigrants were "swamping" the country. However the electorate was unreceptive to the Conservative's anti-EC rhetoric in the 1989 Euro-elections, while Thatcherite values failed to take root in Scotland. The "New Right, New Racism" thesis shares Hall's tendency to afford Thatcherism the status of a coherent ideological programme, ignoring the differences between the rhetoric of the Salisbury Group or Tory Right, and the policies of the Thatcher governments, shaped by the demands of issue management.

#### Thatcherism as Statecraft.

Thatcherism should be viewed as more than a fusion of doctrinal themes. The policies adopted by the Thatcher governments are also important part of its politics of nationhood. The structural limitations imposed by political life mean that Thatcherite statecraft often had to chart a pragmatic course, at the expense of doctrinal consistency. The "one nation" strategy of earlier Conservative governments was built on the electoral appeal of minimizing social divisions and was expressed in the language of nationhood and national unity. Bulpitt argues that Thatcherism falls within the tradition of Conservative Party statecraft as its prime concern is to maintain the autonomy of the centre, though the methods used to do this by the Thatcher

governments have not been consistent.(Bulpitt,1986,a & 1991).In this account Conservative statecraft is concerned with party management, winning elections and hegemony in political argument,plus establishing a level of government competence.Thatcherism then has to deal with these political and electoral realities,and must be more flexible than an exclusively ideological approach to government would allow.For Bulpitt, "the first Thatcher government was designed primarily as an experiment in government survival rather than in economic or political theory" (Bulpitt,1986,p.34).

Requirements of pragmatism and issue management shaped Thatcherism's politics of nationhood.The politics of nationhood employed by Thatcherism is not only doctrinally inconsistent,but uneven in application.It is more pragmatic than a strictly ideologically nationalist strategy,but different from a "one nation" approach because it does not actively seek national unity as its end goal.The Thatcher governments had to react pragmatically to developments overseas (eg the Falklands War or European integration), while domestic problems involving the Union and the divisions exacerbated by government policies and recession have not been addressed along the lines of the "one nation" integrative strategy.

Bulpitt's theory of statecraft is important in noting the limitations imposed by political reality:the need to win elections, win arguments and adopt workable policies.However,in terms of the politics of the nation, Thatcherism has rejected the "one nation" and "nationalist" strategies put forward by Conservatives in the 1960s.In this respect, Thatcherism differs from previous Conservative statecraft whose electoral fortunes and political arguments were rooted in socially integrative "one nation" politics.However,



those who see Thatcherism as doctrinally consistent neglect its failure to develop a coherent national strategy or redefined concept of the nation. Instead, it offered policies which have in some areas promoted the language of nationhood (eg on Europe, race relations and at the time of the Falklands War) but also adopted divisive policies weakening national unity and the Union.

In policy areas such as Europe, race relations and territorial politics, Thatcherism had significant problems in formulating and applying a consistent strategy, illustrating its limited success in developing a new national strategy. In statecraft terms, Thatcherism was unable to develop a clear, electorally popular national strategy to unite the Conservative Party and establish issue hegemony. On Europe, divisions within the government and the wider Conservative Party on EC integration were a key factor in events leading to Heseltine's leadership challenge. Thatcher's use of the language of nationhood may have had some popular appeal, but the 1989 European elections saw the Conservative's "diet of Brussels" campaign widely criticized.<sup>9</sup> Thatcher's maximalist account of sovereignty tied her governments' hands in the necessarily pragmatic approach to European negotiations, working against the development of a clear view of Britain's world role. On issues of immigration and race relations, the language of nationhood has also proved to be popular on the Conservative Right and among the electorate in general. Again though Thatcherism did not produce a coherent response to the problems of an ethnically pluralist society, and its use of ideas of national identity was divisive rather than integrative.

The Thatcher governments' actions in the European and race politics areas are more fully examined in subsequent chapters. Here though I will examine how Thatcherism responded to a short-term problem in the sphere of the politics of nationhood, namely the Falklands conflict, and to tensions within Unionist politics.

(a) The Falklands War.

In 1982 Thatcherism appropriated the language of nationhood following the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands to which Britain had an (anachronistic) historical claim. The significance of the Falklands War episode for this study lies in the ease with which Thatcherism adopted the language of nationhood, and the domestic effects of this. Thatcher's own instinctive values and political style were important as she manipulated latent patriotism for political benefits. Thatcherism then briefly established its populist-nationalist credentials, with the government's determined pursuit of an ultimately successful military option entrenching its position. Several paradoxical strands within Thatcherism's rhetoric were masked by this success. The 1981 British Nationality Act had not given Falkland Islanders British citizenship, though Thatcher claimed that the islanders were "more British than the British" in terms of their values and allegiance. Talk of popular sovereignty and self-determination reflected the islanders' desire to remain a British territory, but they had had little democratic input into decision-making or earlier attempts to resolve the problem diplomatically.



Thatcherism seized on a mood of patriotism and national pride to attack the "enemies within" (eg the NUR and the BBC) who sought to undermine British prestige or undermine British society. The conflict also strengthened the hand of the Conservative Right as issues of nationhood and national identity returned to the political agenda. Contributors to "The Salisbury Review" called for a reassertion of national identity, manipulating the "Falklands Spirit" to call for the repatriation of immigrants. On the Left, the ease with which Thatcherism appropriated the language of nationhood caused considerable concern, though the Labour Party leadership backed military action and employed much of the same patriotic rhetoric. Robert Gray argued that the Falklands episode showed the continued strength of the historical relationship between the political Right and concepts of the nation (R.Gray, 1982 a & b). Hobsbawm and Gray noted though that the Left need not necessarily be disqualified from adopting the concept of the nation for its own purposes (Hobsbawm, 1983). Both also drew a contrast between Thatcherite populism on the Falklands issue and the detrimental domestic effects of Thatcherism on social cohesion and communal relations. Barnett's "Iron Britannia" argued that the episode was a reassertion of "Churchillism", reviving themes of national unity, militarism, imperialism and parliamentary sovereignty (Barnett, 1982).

The Falklands War is best seen as a short-term expression of Thatcherite nationalism rather than part of a coherent nationalist strategy. This nationalist rhetoric matched the public mood, but its domestic effects were short-lived. The tensions within Thatcherite doctrine undermined the language of nationhood which was used: its divisive elements could not be disguised by jingoism after the conflict ended. The Falklands conflict



neither ensured the predominance of the Conservative Right nor inaugurated a coherent nationalist strategy as the Left had feared. Instead it illustrated the continued relevance of the Conservative Party's historical links with nationalist rhetoric and the way it could be mobilized by a determined, populist government. In the short term, Thatcherism had restored the pre-eminent position of the conservative concept of the nation, gaining issue hegemony, government competence and electoral benefits. It did not mark the beginning of a nationalist strategy though and problems remained for the government and for the conservative nation, particularly over the Union.

(b) The Union: Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Conservatism's "one nation" strategy had historically sought to minimise the effects of both class and territorial divisions within British society. In Scotland, this was expressed through a Unionist ideology which allowed peripheral elites a high level of autonomy in a number of policy areas. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also benefited from over-representation at Westminster and through proportionately higher levels of public spending by the centre. The Conservative Party's "one nation" strategy was closely linked with Unionist ideology, but its fortunes have been in steady decline in Scotland since 1955 when the party gained over 50% of the vote. This decline reached crisis proportions in the Thatcher years with the Conservative share of the vote falling to 24% in 1987, the loss of 11 seats leaving the party with just 10 MPs, 6 of whom had been returned with less than 40% of the vote. The Conservative vote had declined well below the party's support in England and, more significantly, in 1983 was 17% worse

than would be expected taking into account class and social differentials between England and Scotland (Kendrick & McCrone, 1989, p.599).

The "one nation" Unionist strategy crumbled in the 1960s in the face of growing Scottish nationalism, prompting Heath's 1968 "Perth Declaration" which committed the party to Scottish Devolution despite a lack of long-term party support for this in Scotland (Mitchell, 1990; Smith, 1977). Heath set up the party's Constitutional Committee in 1968, headed by Sir Alec Douglas Home, the (Scottish) former party leader. The Home Report "Scotland's Government" (1970) proposed a directly elected Scottish Convention which would take over the functions of the Scottish committees at Westminster. However, Heath's government did not implement these proposals or those of the Kilbrandon Report of 1973 as the issue began to crumble.

Divisions within the Scottish Conservatives intensified in the party's period in opposition (1974-9) as policy continued its shift between pro-devolution and anti-devolution strategies. The Scottish Conservative Party was split on the devolution issue. Malcom Rifkind's call for a "new Unionism" based on a weak Scottish Assembly took advantage of Thatcher's lack of interest in the issue in the early years of her leadership, but was to be the last significant pro-devolution statement for over a decade (Mitchell, 1990, p.71). By 1976 the anti-devolutionists were in the ascendancy and the party campaigned for a "No" vote in the 1979 referendum, the result of which temporarily weakened the nationalist cause.<sup>9</sup>

In the Conservative's 1979 election victory, the party in Scotland increased its vote and number of parliamentary seats, though this would

later appear to be a blip in its continued long-term electoral decline. The party's national strategy had been weakened by policy shifts and party splits on the fundamental issue of the Union. Its claim to be a national party suffered from inherent tensions because the conservative focus on tradition and national identity had to marry Scottish distinctiveness with a Unionist or "one nation" strategy. The Conservatives' links with consensual politics and its roots in Scotland were in decline by the time of Thatcher's leadership. Traditional Unionist ties among the Protestant working class had declined, the Scottish Conservative Party lost some of its autonomy to a centralizing party machinery, and the identification of the Scottish Tories with Scottish interests and identity waned in the face of a nationalist revival and economic decline (Miller et al, 1981; Kendrick & McCrone, 1989). The policies of the Thatcher governments exacerbated existing problems for the Conservatives in Scotland, and again worked against the creation of a national strategy or coherent concept of nationhood.

The decline in support for the Conservatives in Scotland in the 1983 and 1987 general elections returned the devolution issue to the political agenda. Opponents argued that because of the party's poor showing, the Conservatives did not have a mandate to govern in Scotland. The government countered by arguing that constitutionally its mandate was one over the whole UK, and that the Labour was not the largest English party in 1974. However the decline was a serious and embarrassing one, limiting choice in Scottish Office appointments. English Conservative MPs had to be drafted in to make up the numbers at Scottish debates in the chamber, and the Scottish Affairs Select Committee was wound up in 1988 because of the lack of Conservative MPs able to serve on it.



The validity of Conservative rule in Scotland was also weakened by Thatcherism's free market strategy which clashed with the high level of public administration and state activity in Scotland. In 1988, when the Conservative vote had fallen behind the SNP vote in the local government elections for the first time, Nairn noted that the Scottish middle classes had a corporate identity based on a tradition of public administration, rather than an entrepreneurial identity as Thatcherism demanded (Nairn, 1988, b, p. 31). Despite Thatcher's claim that the Scottish political heritage of Smith and Hume was Thatcherite before Thatcherism, her economic strategy proved unpopular in Scotland, especially as it hastened the decline of the shipbuilding, steel, coal and fishing industries. The recession of the early 1980s hit Scotland hard and reductions in the number of Assisted Areas and the restructuring of regional aid all undermined support for the party, with Labour being seen by many as the best protector of Scottish interests and distinctiveness. In 1987 Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson claimed that Scotland had a culture of dependency rather than enterprise which hindered economic prosperity.

Although Thatcherite policies have been applied in Scotland as well as other parts of the UK, here they have come up against firm opposition and an unresponsive tradition of public service employment and state activity. Rifkind sought to uphold the relative autonomy of the Scottish Office and make Thatcherism more appropriate to the Scottish case, but the loss of a Conservative moral mandate weakened his role and image as Secretary of State for Scotland. The imposition of the Community Charge in 1988 caused further Conservative unpopularity and brought claims that the government was acting contrary to the Act of Union's clause that all parts of the UK

should be subject to the same systems and rates of taxation. The poll tax also illustrated the rise of the Thatcherites within the Scottish Conservative Party. Michael Forsyth's pamphlet "The Case For A Poll Tax" was produced after the 1985 Perth Conference had brought a grassroots revolt on the Scottish rates revaluation. The rise of Forsyth and other Thatcherites caused friction in the Scottish Conservative Party and the Scottish Office as he presided over unpopular reforms in education. Rifkind sought to dilute the more unpopular aspects of Thatcherism to suit Scottish conditions, while Forsyth was determined to impose Thatcherite solutions to Scottish problems.<sup>10</sup> The dispute between the two camps came to a head in 1990 when Forsyth was removed as chairman of the Scottish party, but the damage to an already weakened and demoralized party had already been done.

The 1987 general election left the Conservatives with only 11 seats in Scotland, resulting in new demands for Scottish devolution and claims that the Conservatives had no moral mandate to govern Scotland. Over the next few years, some in the Scottish Conservative Party again began to advocate devolution to revive party fortunes, with some Tories setting up a Conservative Constitutional Forum which proposed an Assembly with tax-raising powers (Mitchell, 1990, ch.7). Those in favour argued that an Assembly with such powers could be introduced provided Scottish MPs were no longer able to vote on non-Scottish matters at Westminster, preventing the West Lothian Question from re-emerging.<sup>11</sup> The 1988 Scottish Conference voted overwhelmingly against legislative devolution.

After 1987, the Conservatives were left isolated with an unpopular and outdated Unionist policy as Labour campaigned for a Scottish Assembly with

legislative and tax-raising powers (Geekie & Levy,1989).Labour and the Liberal Democrats were involved in setting up the Scottish Constitutional Convention under the 1989 Claim of Right which upheld the popular sovereignty of the Scottish people rather than the sovereignty of a Unionist parliament at Westminster (Kellas,1989).The Constitutional Convention was boycotted by both the Conservatives and the SNP,who complained about low levels of nationalist representation and believed the Convention undermined calls for independence.The Convention and Claim of Right succeeded in raising public awareness on constitutional issues and Scottish distinctiveness,though it was still low on the electorate's list of priorities.The Thatcher government rejected calls for a powerful Scottish Assembly,outlined in Labour's Government of Scotland Bill (1988), as likely to undermine the Union and weaken the Scottish economy.

Scotland's constitutional position was a key issue throughout the 1992 general election campaign as opinion polls showed high levels of support for devolution and independence.The Conservatives were the only party to support the existing arrangements as Major and Lang stressed the dangers to Scotland and the rest of the UK of breaking up the Union (Major,1992). Scottish Secretary Ian Lang claimed that Labour's devolution plans would harm the Scottish economy and warned that an independent Scotland could not expect automatic membership of the EC.The leadership did though recognise Scottish concerns and promise a review of the governmental system after the election,but within a Unionist framework.At the general election the Conservatives did better than predicted,taking eleven seats, gaining one seat on 1987 and retaking the Kincardine and Deeside seat lost in a 1991 by-election.The party's share of the vote though was only 25.7%.



Scotland has posed considerable problems for British Conservatives in recent years. In statecraft terms, the success of Thatcherism in establishing government competence, issue hegemony and electoral support has been uneven across the UK, with the Conservatives failing to meet any of these criteria in Scotland. As far as the party's national strategy is concerned, Thatcherism reasserted traditional Unionism, but at a time when popular support for existing constitutional arrangements was falling away. The decline of the Scottish Conservatives reached crisis point as the Thatcher government lost its "moral mandate" in Scotland and implemented unpopular policies there. Of more long-term concern to Conservatives though is the popular belief that the party no longer represents Scottish interests or is concerned with maintaining Scottish cultural distinctiveness and an appropriate level of administrative autonomy.

"It seems that every element which has generated the Scottish political dimension has made Scotland as an ideological category incompatible with generalized Conservative English/British national rhetoric. Any attempt Thatcher makes to bolster her position by the use of British (perceived as English) national rhetoric is likely to fall on deaf ears in Scotland and work to reinforce her perceived anti-Scottishness." (Kendrick & McCrone, 1989, p. 602).

The Scottish situation then illustrates the problems for the modern Conservative Party in using the language of nationhood. The weakening of integrative forces and the reassertion of national identities in the Celtic periphery has undermined the conservative nation and the Conservative Party's national strategy. Thatcherism has maintained elements of Unionism, but not the "one nation" consensual approach which had previously been its strategic partner. This separation has weakened the theoretical conservative nation as well as the Conservative Party's national strategy.

In Scotland, the Thatcher governments maintained a strong Unionist position at a time when its place within the theoretical conservative nation was being challenged and when such a position was increasingly unpopular. In Wales, nationalist demands are less politically and electorally formidable and the Thatcher governments tended to be more pragmatic.<sup>12</sup> Again constitutional reforms have been ruled out, but concessions were made to nationalist pressure with the establishment of the Welsh language television station, Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C), the guaranteed place of the Welsh language in the national curriculum (as it applies in the Principality) and the relative autonomy enjoyed by Peter Walker during his spell at the Welsh Office. The 1992 election manifesto promised to introduce a Welsh Language Act giving the Welsh language the same legal status as English.

In Northern Ireland, Thatcherism was also more pragmatic in its attachment to Unionism, notably over the 1985 signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The close ties between Ulster Unionists and the Conservative Party had declined from the time of the Sunningdale agreement. In 1974, Ulster Unionists resigned the Conservative Whip at Westminster, but only in 1986 was Unionist representation on the party's Executive Committee and Central Council of the National Union formally withdrawn. The authorised establishment of National Union of Conservative Associations in Northern Ireland in 1990 brought the final severance of official links between the Ulster Unionists and the Conservative Party.

The approach of the Thatcher governments to the ongoing problems in Northern Ireland followed the essentially pragmatic course steered by British governments since direct rule was imposed on the Province in 1972. Article Five of the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement stated that:

"the present status of Northern Ireland is that it is part of the United Kingdom. If in the future the majority of the people of Northern Ireland should indicate a wish to become part of a united Ireland, the British Government would support that wish." (quoted in Wilson, 1989, p. 180).

This position was reinforced by subsequent governments. However, the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is anomalous in that its place within the United Kingdom is officially recognised as being conditional on the expressed wishes of a majority of its people (Rose, 1982). Rose argues that Westminster denies the integrity of Northern Ireland by treating it as a separate case, with its borders open to alteration if the majority so wish. The Conservative Party introduced direct rule from Westminster over the Province, but is aware of the long-term problems of this position, as the party's 1991 Campaign Guide makes clear.

"Direct rule works reasonably well in that it has provided fair, responsible and efficient government for Northern Ireland, and considerable progress has been made under it. But the fundamental weakness of direct rule is that it does not allow locally elected politicians to decide policies. The Government's central political objective in Ulster is to transfer powers currently exercised by Ministers to locally elected representatives by re-establishing a devolved administration for the Province as a whole." (The Campaign Guide, 1991, pp. 570/1).

Atkins' early plans for devolution were abandoned while his successor at the Northern Ireland Office, James Prior, also saw his plans for "rolling devolution" run aground in the face of an SDLP boycott. Thatcher meanwhile



recognized the role of the Republic of Ireland in achieving any solution to the Province's problems, without committing herself to bilateral agreements. The 1982 White Paper stated that any solution had to be acceptable to both sides of the community, but the Unionist majority opposed the most significant development of the Thatcher era, the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement arose after the Thatcher had rejected the three constitutional arrangements put forward by the Irish "New Ireland Forum": a unitary Irish state; a federation; or joint British-Irish authority. When asked about the proposals Thatcher replied "out, out, out" to the three strategies while Prior argued that Dublin had to recognize Unionist feelings, Northern Ireland's status as part of the UK and the need for devolved administration (Kenny, 1986). The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement angered Unionists who were little comforted by government claims that the Republic had formally recognized the constitutional position of Northern Ireland and accepted that the Province would remain British for as long as a majority of its people wished. However this was only a *de facto* acceptance of Northern Ireland's position by Dublin (articles 2 & 3 of the Republic's constitution continued to claim sovereignty over Ulster) and the constitutional position remained unclear.

The government hoped the Anglo-Irish Agreement would increase the confidence of the minority Nationalist community in the constitutional arrangements, but it raised the wrath of the majority Loyalist community who resented the influence of a foreign government in the affairs of a part of the UK. Inter-Governmental Conferences were to take place at regular intervals between British and Irish ministers, giving the Irish Foreign

Minister a dual role, as a representative of the Republic and of Northern Ireland's Nationalist community. The British Government were particularly concerned to see increased co-operation between the two states in the fight against terrorism. Indeed this appears to have been one of the main reasons behind Thatcher's support for the Agreement. In practice though any co-operation was partially undermined by political and legal problems over extradition procedures.

In the House of Commons, Thatcher claimed that the Unionist position had been strengthened by the Agreement because Dublin accepted the need for consent in addressing the issue and *de facto* recognized British rule in the Province. She also noted that the Inter-Governmental Conference lacked any executive authority. However, the Unionists fundamentally opposed it, setting back any short-term hopes of devolved power-sharing. Unionist sympathizers within the Conservative Party were also highly sceptical and the Housing Minister Ian Gow, a Thatcher confidant, resigned from the Government in protest. Gow argued that the Agreement gave "a wholly disproportionate consideration to the views of the minority." (Hansard, vol. 87, col. 760).

The parliamentary debate also revealed some Conservative support for a fuller integration of Northern Ireland into the UK. Julian Amery argued that Northern Ireland citizens were effectively "second-class citizens" not enjoying the democratic rights of other UK citizens. Pressures for full integration also gained momentum in the Province after the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The 1986 Campaign for Equal Citizenship urged mainland parties to put up candidates in Northern Ireland, with some of its backers going on to establish an unofficial Conservative Association in North Down in 1988. The

party leadership was not prepared to recognise Conservative Associations and candidates there but a grassroots rebellion saw the 1988 Party Conference vote to recognise them by an overwhelming majority. By 1991 11 affiliated associations had been formed, but performances in the European elections were poor. Earlier 6 unofficial Conservatives had formed the largest party on North Down Council after local election victories in 1989. The Northern Ireland Conservative Associations argued for the reintegration of the Province into the party system, enabling people there to vote for the party of government rather than on sectarian lines. In 1992 the Northern Ireland Conservatives fielded eleven candidates, polling over 44,000 votes (5.7%) despite a noticeable lack of organizational support from Central Office. In North Down Dr Laurence Kennedy scored 32% of the vote but criticized the Prime Minister and Northern Ireland Secretary for their lack of public support for his campaign.

#### Summary and Conclusions.

Thatcherism broke with the Conservative Party's "one nation" national strategy but did not develop its own nationalist strategy. Instead, Thatcherism has revived the Conservative domination of the language of nationhood, but at a time when the nation-state and national identity were being challenged by forces both inside and outside the state. An analysis of Thatcherism's politics of nationhood encounters similar methodological problems to those found in general studies of Thatcherism. I have argued that a study of Thatcherism should work from several different levels and that for the politics of nationhood this means looking at Thatcher's own instinctive nationalism, at the tensions between neo-liberal and traditional



authoritarian accounts of individual and nation, and at how the Thatcher governments have reacted within policy spheres relevant to nationhood. This tripartite approach avoids an undue stress on one particular area, recognizing the shortcomings of each approach. Thatcherism is not internally consistent, uniform or static.

The most useful studies of Thatcherism provide accounts relevant to this thesis: Gamble notes the tensions within Thatcherite doctrine; Jessop and others examine the divisive effects of Thatcherism on society; while Bulpitt shows that doctrine must often play second fiddle to considerations of statecraft. But an examination of the politics of nationhood warns against crediting Thatcherism with too much coherence or consistency in either doctrine or policy. The policies and doctrines espoused by Thatcherism have also changed over time, particularly on European and race issues.

Thatcher herself is an instinctive rather than intellectual nationalist: her idea of the nation is born from gut values and loyalties, and is not translated into a theoretically coherent approach to politics. This instinctive nationalism has been significant in a number of areas. On Europe, Thatcher's personal animosity to European integration, which she interpreted as a threat to national identity and self-government, was outlined in her 1988 Bruges Speech. Her stance on Europe caused divisions within the Conservative Party, tensions within the EC and ultimately contributed to her downfall. Thatcher's instinctive nationalism was apparent during the Falklands conflict, while its Southern English petty bourgeois values have

been perceived as anti-Scottish and as detrimental to harmonious race relations.

Doctrinally, Thatcherism departed from the theoretical cornerstones of the conservative nation. Thatcherism fused the economic individualism of neo-liberal thought with a stress on morality and authority found in traditional Tory thought. This mix of political and cultural accounts of the national community was a radical departure from previous conservative accounts of the nation. These political and cultural accounts of nationhood have in the past tended to veer off at tangents from mainstream accounts of the conservative nation (see Chapter One). Its fusion of different ideas on the meaning and significance of nationhood created inconsistencies and tensions within Thatcherism. The emphasis on individualism, limited citizenship and the centrality of market relations rests uneasily with values of authority, order and the protection of a traditional culture. The economic account of citizenship, where individuals are seen as consumers or economic units, is partnered by an account of man as a social animal whose identity is shaped by his communal role in the family and the nation. State involvement in the economic sphere is to be reduced, but the power of the state has to be increased to remove alternative centres of power and to protect the British way of life. Individual freedom may then be enhanced in the market place, but is restricted when it threatens traditional morality or communal identity. Thatcherism may have been instinctively nationalist in defending political self-government, but had an economically internationalist outlook.

Thatcherism was also prevented from espousing a clearer concept of nationhood by the demands of statecraft and the limitations imposed by political life. Just as the economic doctrine of monetarism had to change in the face of the realities of government, so the politics of nationhood are shaped and constrained by the need for issue management eg in race relations. In such areas the Thatcher governments acted pragmatically rather than with ideological purpose, illustrating again the gap between conservative thought and the actions of Conservative governments. The need for pragmatism and flexibility on European issues eventually resulted in the rejection of Thatcherite accounts of sovereignty. In the sphere of the politics of race, the strengthening of laws on immigration and citizenship reflected the values of the Conservative Right, but there was a more pragmatic approach to the integration of ethnic minorities into British society. In both cases, conservatism struggled to adapt its concept of the nation to the new realities of the decline of sovereignty and the development of an ethnically-pluralist society. This theoretical confusion was reflected in government policies which were more akin to pragmatic damage limitation or issue management exercises than well-structured governing codes.

The problems of statecraft and doctrinal inconsistency show that the politics of nationhood is no longer easy or natural territory for Conservatives. Accounts of immigration laws or the Falklands conflict as ushering in a coherent nationalist strategy proved erroneous, exaggerating the doctrinal consistency of Thatcherism and the possibility of the Conservative Party producing a workable national strategy across the wide range of policy spheres which a politics of nationhood would need to



envelop. Thatcherism was a departure from "one nation" strategies and, while some of its concerns with national identity drew on Powellite themes, also differs from the nationalist strategy proposed by Powell.

The environment in which the Thatcher governments operated was one unsuitable to the old "one nation" or nationalist strategies, but also one in which Thatcherism struggled to develop a new national strategy. It did enjoy some success in restoring Conservative dominance over the language of nationhood, enabling Thatcherism to present itself as a nationalist-populist response to economic decline. But this nationalist-populist image and rhetoric developed at a time when the relevance of the nation was being questioned. Thatcherism tried to breathe new life into the traditional "British way of life" but this proved inappropriate to a changing world. The bases of national identity put forward by Thatcherism were also divisive, marginalizing society's disadvantaged and minority groups. The policies of the Thatcher governments tended to divide rather than unite the country, again breaking with "one nation" conservatism. This "de-integrative" social and economic outcome was exacerbated by the unpopularity of Thatcherism in parts of the UK: Thatcherism was territorially uneven in its popularity, while its espousal of Unionism was also uneven. In Scotland, Thatcherism's refusal to alter constitutional arrangements deepened the crisis of the Scottish Conservative Party, while in Northern Ireland the Anglo-Irish Agreement undermined traditional Conservative Unionism.

The overall record of Thatcherism on the politics of nation and nationhood is then a mixed one. In terms of the theoretical foundations of the conservative nation, Thatcherism's mix of the political and cultural

accounts was not of a kind usually adopted by British Conservatives, but one drawing on themes often found outside of mainstream Conservative thought. In particular the focus on individualism weakened the communitarian element in conservative thought. Thatcherite doctrine and strategies did not find effective answers to new problems or questions about national identity and the structure of the nation-state. Instead Thatcherism revived some of the old language of nationhood without becoming an intellectually coherent nationalist strategy. The language of nationhood is no longer a potent weapon in the Conservative armoury: traditional views of the nation have been challenged by changes in British society (immigration, decline of Unionism) and beyond (end of empire and EC membership). Thatcherism shows the problems modern Conservatives face in pursuing a consistent politics of nationhood or national strategy. The difficulties for the Conservative Party also illustrate the need for the theoretical conservative nation to take account of new developments and abandon old myths. Thatcherism recognized the failings of both "one nation" and Powellite courses of action, but for conservatives offered little that positively addressed issues of identity, citizenship, community and self-government.

#### Footnotes:

1. Norton's analysis of the voting records and stated positions of Conservative MPs showed that only 72 (19%) were Thatcherites (defined as being economic neo-liberals or on the Tory Right). The majority of MPs (217 or 58%) were "party faithful" (Norton, 1990).
2. Compare Thatcher's Methodist influences with the Catholic/Christian Democratic tone of Chris Patten in "The Power To Change", *Marxism Today*, February 1991. See also Will Hutton: "A Rosier Shade of Grey", *Marxism Today*, April 1991.
3. Note the increased role of policy "think-tanks" in the Thatcher era.



4. On Thatcherite economics see David Smith: *"Mrs Thatcher's Economics"*, Heinemann Educational, Oxford, 1988. Smith notes the early demise of pure monetarism and the shift to a more pragmatic economic strategy.
5. Interview, *Woman's Own*, 31st October 1987. This quote is often taken out of context: the full interview reveals that Thatcher's main point was that people evaded their responsibilities by blaming their problems on society.
6. Regional voting in the general elections of the Thatcher era was as follows:

	<u>South</u>	<u>Midlands</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Wales</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
1979	51.4%	47.6%	40.7%	32.5%	31.3%
1983	50.6%	46.8%	38.4%	31.0%	28.4%
1987	51.8%	47.8%	36.6%	29.5%	24.0%

Figures are taken from the David Butler & Dennis Kavanagh series on British General Elections (Macmillan, London) in which East Anglia is counted as part of the Midlands.

7. On the limited influence of "moral Right" pressure groups on government policy in the Thatcher years see Martin Durham: "The Thatcher Government and 'the Moral Right'", in *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.42, no.1, 1989.
8. In the June 1989 elections to the European Parliament, the Conservatives lost 13 seats and polled only 33.6% of the UK vote.
9. On Scottish politics see James G. Kellas: *"The Scottish Political System"*, 4th edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989. On Scottish nationalism see Jack Brand: *"The National Movement in Scotland"*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978 and Mark V. Kauppi: "The Decline of the SNP, 1977-1981" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.5, no.3, 1982.
10. See Neal Ascherson: "The Forsyth Saga" in *The Independent on Sunday*, 16 September 1990.
11. The West Lothian Question, first raised by Tam Dalyell, asks whether constituencies sending representatives to a Scottish Assembly could still elect MPs to sit at Westminster. In the 1992 general election campaign Robin Cook again raised the question of whether members of the Scottish Assembly could sit as MPs at Westminster or serve in a British Government.
12. The electoral impact of Plaid Cymru has been limited by Welsh nationalism's linguistic (and potentially exclusivist) basis. See Denis Balsom, Peter Madgwick & Denis Van Mechelen: "The Political Consequences of Welsh Identity", in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.7, no.1, 1984. Also Dafydd Elis Thomas: "The Constitution of Wales" in Bernard Crick: *"National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom"*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1991.



## CHAPTER SIX: THATCHERISM AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

British Conservative responses to the pressures for greater European economic, monetary and political integration from the other EC states have revived arguments about national identity and the structure of the nation-state. The debate in the Conservative Party reflects the way in which national identity is having to be reinterpreted in the light of recent developments in domestic and international politics. In this chapter, I examine the responses of the Thatcher and Major governments to changes in the European Community. Chapter Seven then focuses on the discourse these developments have provoked within the Conservative Party. The concept of sovereignty is central to the Conservative debate on European policy, but is defined in different ways by the key players in the debate, namely the Euro-enthusiasts and the Euro-sceptics. An assessment of the meaning and relevance of the concept of the sovereign nation state in the modern world is therefore important to an understanding of Thatcherite policy and the debate within the Conservative Party.

National identity and independence have often been underlying themes in British foreign policy. Imperialism and "splendid isolation" fostered myths of national uniqueness which are also reflected in the traditional view that Britain is significantly different to its European neighbours both politically and culturally. The decline of Britain as an imperial and economic power brought only a gradual realization of the necessity of a new direction in British foreign policy. William Wallace claims that British foreign policy has been paralysed for several decades by a dispute between

Atlanticists and Europeans, the former looking to links with the United States as a means of strengthening the Anglo-Saxon alliance while the latter group believes that the EC is the mechanism through which Britain can secure her world role (W. Wallace, 1991). British foreign policy is an important branch of the politics of nationhood. Trends towards interdependence and globalization have illustrated the declining efficacy of national sovereignty. Nation-states have lost much of their autonomy in the spheres of economic action and security (Held, 1989; Beetham, 1982). The scope for independent national action has been reduced and this, taken with Britain's relative decline, has meant that isolation is not a feasible policy option, encouraging states to enter supra-national organizations such as the EC. This in turn has had a significant effect on domestic political discourse where the debate has often returned to ideas of sovereignty and national identity. As moves towards European integration gathered pace in the 1980s, the debate in the Conservative Party became more acute, illustrating the important links between foreign policy and domestic discourse.

The Conservative response to developments in Europe is systematic of the problems Britain has encountered in seeking to establish a new position for itself on the world stage. This uncertainty about foreign policy options is part of the wider question of national identity and independence which Powellism had addressed earlier. Sovereignty has been a central concept in Conservative discourse on Europe, but its meaning is disputed. There are two main camps involved in the EC debate within the Conservative Party: those who relate sovereignty to national autonomy and independence (the Euro-sceptics) and those who accept that national sovereignty defined as independence is a sham, with effective influence only coming through a

partnership of nations (the Euro-enthusiasts). In the next chapter I will examine attitudes to the EC by these two camps, but first I will assess the role ideas of sovereignty have played in shaping the policies of the Thatcher governments. The different interpretations of national sovereignty are clearly articulated in the contrasting attitudes of Margaret Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe.

Mrs Thatcher's vision, as outlined in her Bruges Speech of September 1988, is of a Europe of "willing and active co-operation between independent sovereign states". In this scenario nation-states will retain ultimate control over economic, monetary and fiscal matters. The nation-state will continue to be the centre of decision-making, with the EC limited by the principle of subsidiarity to action only in areas where it is more effective than the sovereign state, like trade and agriculture. For Thatcher:

"the ability to run monetary, economic and fiscal policy lies at the heart of what constitutes a sovereign state. The rights and powers of national governments and parliaments in these matters must be preserved." (Hansard, vol 154, col 1121; 15th June 1989).

The meaning of sovereignty as given by Thatcher is based around the traditional British idea of the ultimate authority of the Queen-in-Parliament over all other powers internal or external to the nation-state. Economic and monetary union (EMU) would undermine British sovereignty by weakening the power of parliament, transferring its authority to a European Central Bank and other EC institutions. Sovereignty is defined as self-government and requires a high level of national independence. EMU would have an adverse effect on national sovereignty for it entails the transfer of ultimate responsibility for fiscal and monetary policy away from



national institutions to European ones. Thatcher also links the concept of sovereignty as national independence with the protection of national identity. Any integration which goes beyond her favoured vision of a Community of independent and diverse nation-states, will inevitably weaken traditional national identities. Thatcher believes that supporters of European Union want to replace the nation as the dominant focus of national loyalty and identity, constructing in its place an artificial, supra-national identity. A federal Europe would not have the gradually evolved sense of shared values and common allegiance which give meaning to the national community. As she noted at Bruges:

"To try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging and would jeopardize the objectives we seek to achieve. Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality. Certainly we want to see Europe more united and with a greater sense of common purpose, but it must be in a way which preserves the different traditions, parliamentary powers and sense of national pride in one's own country." (Thatcher, 1988, p.4).

Thatcher's account, based on the ultimate authority of national parliaments to make core economic and political decisions and on the continued relevance of national identity, implies that sovereignty is an absolute rather than a relative concept. Economic and monetary union has become the point of no return for the Thatcherite account, for beyond this national independence and identity will be irrevocably damaged. Thatcher has noted that joining the EC inevitably involved the transfer of some powers to Brussels, such as in the areas of trade and agriculture, but the kernel of sovereignty (parliamentary supremacy and national identity) must survive any erosion of the outer shell. Some areas of national competence can be

given up, provided ultimate control remains at the national level, but EMU is a step too far. A more detailed account of Thatcher's opposition to the trend towards economic and political integration is given in Chapter Seven. At this stage though it is useful to compare the Thatcherite account of sovereignty with that of her one-time Chancellor and Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe.

In an article published in the week of his resignation from Mrs Thatcher's cabinet, Sir Geoffrey Howe gave a different account of sovereignty, rejecting Thatcher's absolutist definition (Howe, 1990). These differences on the issue were further illustrated in Howe's resignation speech, when he referred to them as a matter of policy rather than emphasis, and in revelations about his role in pushing an unwilling Thatcher towards ERM membership. Howe believed the optimum explanation of sovereignty is to see it as:

"not some pre-defined absolute, but a flexible, adaptable, organic notion that evolves and adjusts with circumstances... (Sovereignty is) a nation's practical capacity to maximize its influence in the world." (Howe, 1990, p. 676 & 678).

Howe notes that Britain historically enjoyed an almost unique position of the absolute central authority of the sovereign Parliament. Because of this, sovereignty has culturally come to be associated with separateness from continental Europe, though in the pragmatic tradition of the British constitution it ought to be recognized that sovereignty is divisible. "It is not virginity, which you either have or you don't". Howe sees effective sovereignty as expressed in the capacity of a state to have power and influence at international level. This is to be achieved through a "mingling



of authority" rather than an isolationist stance. The EC allows member states to forgo some decision-making powers to achieve greater influence and a "maximization of sovereign power." Howe draws an analogy between the EC and a multi-coloured rope:

"As I see it, the Community represents the coming together of twelve different coloured skeins of silk, each of which retains its unique quality, but all of which gain in strength by being engaged with each other. The phrase 'ever closer union' in the Treaty of Rome implies a separateness as well as unification: as the twelve national strands intertwine, they remain distinct enough to be seen separately from one another." (Howe, 1990, p. 685).

Sovereignty for Howe is also directly related to the wishes of the political community, so that the 1975 referendum on EC membership was an expression of "self-determination." But sovereignty must also be rooted in a practical capacity of maintaining physical control and security as in the questions of citizenship and nationality from the Falklands and Gibraltar to Hong Kong. Here again the concept of British sovereignty is not an absolute but must be related to practical questions of power and authority. Unlike the Thatcherites or Euro-sceptics who regard anything beyond the internal market as a threat to Britain's absolute sovereignty, Howe (like Heath and Heseltine, whose views will be assessed in the following chapter) sees sovereignty as a capacity to influence and wield power which can only be achieved through the transfer of some state powers to supra-national institutions.'



## Sovereignty and the European Community.

The growth of the EC should be seen in the context of the real decline in the scope of nation-states for effective autonomous action (Held,1989). Economic affairs are conducted in a global rather than national environment given the internationalization of communications, production,finance and trade.The size and strength of multinational organizations has added to the global scale of economic action,although the extent to which they actively limit the state's scope for action is questionable (Turner,1972). Wallace notes that the tradition of economic openness and free trade have made the British state particularly vulnerable to the loss of economic autonomy (W.Wallace,1986).However,the Thatcher governments believed that the City of London would be in a strong position to benefit from the integration of financial markets,and have encouraged foreign firms to invest in Britain. In a nuclear age of heightened military technology,the capacity of the state to defend its territory and citizens through isolated or independent action has also declined.The trend is towards an integration of defence forces and military command structures in organizations like NATO.The limitations on state autonomy have been illustrated in this area by the presence of American bases and weapons on British soil beyond the direct control of the government.

International organizations are frequently cited in absolutist accounts as limiting the sovereignty of nation-states,obliging member states to act according to their treaty commitments.But in such organizations ultimate power and decision-making rests in the hands of national governments,with bodies such as the United Nations being weak unless resolutions have the

explicit backing of the most powerful states. The making of treaties by states is indeed a case of sovereignty in action, the states displaying their international legal personality. The EC is a special type of international organization as it acts as an international actor in its own right in certain spheres, especially in trade and foreign affairs. However the scope for EC action in such circumstances ultimately depends on the agreement of its component member states. The EC is not a federation or autonomous actor; instead it is best seen as a union of states or a confederation, with the member states pooling their resources while retaining ultimate control over their own affairs in most circumstances (Brewin, 1987; Taylor, 1991, b). The institutional form and overall direction of the EC is determined by its member states, though the EC enjoys some autonomy through its legal system. The Treaty of Rome is not an EC constitution, but an international treaty, ratified by the national parliaments of the member states. The right to withdraw from or redraft the Treaty of Rome is the legal prerogative of national parliaments, though in reality such decisions are taken by national governments. The extension of majority voting, the EC's democratic deficit, the extension of Community competence and greater European integration in economic, monetary and political spheres all affect state sovereignty and are important factors shaping British policy.

The effect which the EC is said to have on sovereignty depends on the definition of sovereignty involved. If any loss of decision-making authority by national governments is taken to be a loss of state sovereignty then clearly the role of the EC in structuring trade relations and agricultural production has impinged on the sovereignty of its member states. Sovereignty though is better defined as ultimate control over key economic and



political decisions by internal state structures, coupled with effective international influence. This definition permits the pooling of certain decision-making capacities with other comparable states to increase collective influence, while retaining a high level of national input and democratic control.

The neo-functional account of European integration envisages a substantial transfer of sovereignty from the nation-state to the EC thereby countering the decline in the capacity for action of the state. An alternative inter-governmentalist account though recognizes the "obstinacy" of the nation-state, arguing that integration would be "negative" rather than "positive" (ie concerned with removing barriers rather than transferring state authority to EC institutions), with states protecting their vital interests in the sphere of "high politics" (Webb, 1983). Despite the federal vision of the Community's founding fathers, the nation-state has not been transcended and British politicians in particular have resisted moves aimed at reducing the authority of the state. The neo-functional prediction that the nation-state would plunge into irreversible decline as its capacity to provide the resources and utilities demanded by its citizens was revealed has not proved accurate (Lodge, 1978). Functionalists argued that national governments, increasingly unable to maximize socio-economic welfare, were being sustained by the misplaced loyalties of their citizens. The claim was that loyalty would be almost automatically transferred to supranational authorities which could provide the utilities desired by citizens. However, the functionalists seriously underestimated the staying power of the nation-state and the continued strength of national identity. Loyalty and allegiance to the traditional national community are not dependent on economic or



social welfare, but run deeper in the culture and consciousness of the community. At the same time, public identification with the EC has not been forthcoming in Britain. Indeed public opinion has often taken a negative view of a bureaucratic, unaccountable EC, which during the late 1970s and early 1980s was frequently portrayed as having a structural bias against British national interests.<sup>2</sup>

The EC has been unable to forge a positive cultural or political identity to compete with that of the traditional national community (Smith, 1992). It is an artificial creation attracting little public participation or enthusiasm despite encroaching further into the everyday lives of Europeans. It seems ill-equipped to compete with powerful, long-held ethnic or national allegiances. So although the nation-state may suffer a loss of authority as European integration proceeds there is little evidence as yet to suggest that European Union will undermine the primacy of national identity and loyalty. In fact there is some evidence that the identity of some nation-states has been regenerated through their membership of the EC. States such as Belgium or the Netherlands have achieved a level of influence beyond their independent means while Spain and Portugal emerged from dictatorship to reclaim their place in European affairs through the EC. Domestically, Thatcher's image as a defender of British interests was first generated in the budget disputes in the Community. The "independence in Europe" strategy of the Scottish National Party also suggests that not only is the EC compatible with strong national identities, but it may be an arena in which it can be successfully nurtured. In general states have been unwilling to cede effective authority on issues

of vital national interest, and this unwillingness may yet undermine the trend towards positive integration codified at Maastricht.

The Heath government claimed that membership of the European Community would offer a greater role in international affairs plus economic improvement in return for EC control of some areas. The White Paper on UK membership and the Heath government stated that this would not mean a loss of national sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> One major area of controversy concerning the effect the EC has had on national sovereignty is that of the primacy of EC law over national law and the status of the 1972 European Communities Act and the 1986 Single European Act in the unwritten British constitution.

Once Britain had signed up to the Treaty of Rome, European Community law became the law of the UK, having primacy in cases of conflict. The European Court has ruled that entry to the EC creates a new legal system with EC regulations being binding and directly applicable. According to Community law, national legislation cannot conflict with or override EC law and the courts of member states cannot issue authoritative interpretations of EC law (Collins, 1984; Lasok & Bridge, 1987). The 1978 *Simmenthal* case in the European Court held that EC law took priority over both prior and subsequent national legislation. Lord Denning's judgements in two notable cases concerning the relationship between EC and British law reflect the tensions between the claims of primacy for either Community law or Parliamentary sovereignty (Denning, 1987). The basis of UK sovereignty is the supremacy of the Crown in Parliament and Denning argued, in the *Macarthys v Smith* (1981) case that:



"if the time should come when our Parliament deliberately passes an Act - with the intention of repudiating the Treaty or any provision of it, or intentionally of acting inconsistently with it, and says so in express terms - then I should have thought that it would be the duty of our courts to follow the statute of our Parliament." (quoted in Collins, 1984,p.28).

However this is *in extremis*. Where possible, English courts should see Community law as part of English law and interpret cases in this light. Again in the *Macarthys v Smith* (1981) case Denning noted that:

"Community law is now part of our law; and, whenever there is any inconsistency, Community law has priority. It is not supplanting English law. It is part of our law which overrides any part which is inconsistent with it." (quoted in Akehurst, 1989, p.355).

Denning's judgement in the 1979 *Shields v E Coombes (Holdings) Ltd* sex discrimination case also reflected the priority of EC law in cases of inconsistency between national and Community law. The Treaty of Rome did not become British law until the British Parliament had codified it in statute.

The Merchant Shipping Act (1988) was found to be contrary to Community law by the European Court of Justice in 1991, although the Act had already been in part altered by Parliament in 1989 when problems were first raised. The *Factortame Ltd. and others v Secretary of State for Transport* (1989) hearing in the House of Lords saw Spanish fisherman challenge the legality of the Merchant Shipping Act (1988) under Community law (Akehurst, 1989). EC directives had established a common fisheries policy allocating quotas to the member states, and Spanish fisherman had registered their ship as British allowing them to participate in catching the UK's quota. However, the 1988 Act changed the rules so that ships owned by British companies controlled by foreign nationals could no longer be registered as British. In



the House of Lords case, Lord Bridge temporarily suspended the 1988 Act until the European Court of Justice had reached a decision on its compatibility with Community law. This was the first time a law passed by both Houses of Parliament had been suspended by a British Court and was interpreted as a sign of the limitations imposed on parliamentary sovereignty by the EC. In June 1991 the European Court of Justice found against the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act (1988) that UK-registered ships had to be 75% British-owned and have 75% of its crew resident in the UK. It did though accept that it was lawful for the British government to insist that UK-registered ships should have *bona fide* links with the country. Political reaction among Euro-sceptics, at a time of raised interest in the EC and British sovereignty, was hostile, though the rulings only confirmed earlier beliefs in the supremacy of EC law in all but the most extreme cases.

The orthodox reading of British constitutional law states that parliament cannot bind its successors, but the extent to which the European Communities Act is binding is a matter of controversy. Ultimately it would appear that parliament has the power to repeal the Act if Britain is to leave the Community, but any amendments made which conflict with EC law or treaty obligations would create a conflict of constitutional systems. Section 2 (4) of the 1972 Act is of particular importance, implicitly preventing future parliaments from passing legislation which conflicts with Community law. The complexity of this clause is expressed by Lasok and Bridge:

"The European Act does not seek to guarantee the supremacy of Community law by forbidding Parliament to enact conflicting legislation. Instead the guarantee is provided by denying effectiveness to such legislation within the legal systems of the United Kingdom to

the extent that it conflicts with Community law." (Lasok & Bridge, 1987, p.373).

The European Community is then a separate legal entity with its own autonomous legal order binding on member states and which takes priority over national law in cases of conflict. EC law claims to take priority even over the fundamental constitutional law of member states, though many British legal experts claim that legally and politically British law would take priority in the case of a deliberate and intended clash of interests, upholding the British parliament as the supreme sovereign authority.

The following section of this chapter focuses on the Conservative governments European policy since 1979, showing in particular how moves towards deeper European integration affected accounts of sovereignty in Conservative political discourse. Since the Single European Act of 1986, the momentum towards economic, monetary and political union has gathered pace, going further and faster than the British government had hoped. In terms of sovereignty, moves towards a single currency and a European Central Bank were resisted by Thatcher on the grounds that they were incompatible with national sovereignty. Proposals for political union have raised questions about subsidiarity and community competence, while the reform of EC institutions has been interpreted in terms of a democratic deficit. The theme of national sovereignty is also important in debates on proposals for common defence plus foreign policies. Many of these proposals go beyond the Thatcherite vision the single market, but the SEA itself raises problematic issues like immigration policy and tax harmonization, while common social policies and EMU are regarded by Euro-enthusiasts as inevitable after the signing of the SEA.



### Conservative Policy on Europe, 1979-1992.

Conservative policy towards the European Community since 1979 has not followed one clear course, varying between the ideological and the pragmatic, the integrationalist and the isolationist. This is in part explained by the nature of EC decision-making which, because of the need to find a common ground between competing national interests, is necessarily built on compromise, bargaining and coalition-making. The attitude and policies of post-1979 Conservative governments towards developments in the European Community suffered from the lack of clarity of its medium and long-term aims, and the tension between its ideological and pragmatic responses to issues and problems in the European agenda.

In supporting the single market initiative, the government saw the Community's purpose and scope as essentially economic rather than political, the goal being to bring about a free trade area within the EC rather than seeking a higher degree of political union. Proposals for moves towards a single European market owed much to the neo-liberal vision of British Conservatives: the proposals to free financial services and the movement of capital were decidedly Thatcherite in character. The subsequent moves towards deeper European integration forced the government onto the defensive, as it sought to slow down and limit future developments in the EC. The important connection between foreign policy and domestic politics is seen in the political discourse on sovereignty used by the Thatcher governments, and its primary concern to protect British interests. Even where developments in the EC have been ideologically in accord with Thatcherism,



the British government has often sought to uphold national (especially economic) interests.

This has tended to produce a mixture of pragmatic bargaining, based ultimately on the protection of perceived national interests, and ideological responses to European integration. The rhetoric of sovereignty employed by Thatcher over the budget disputes and EMU linked the government's stance to domestic political discourse, but caused tension between the UK and fellow EC member states. There is also a significant tension in the ideological discourse of the Thatcher governments. They have sought the "Thatcherization of Europe" in terms of the application of neo-liberal and free market solutions to EC problems (the 1992 project, tighter budgetary discipline). But Thatcherite ideology also emphasizes its vision of a Europe of independent nation-states, each retaining a high level of autonomy and diverse national characteristics. This juxtaposition of neo-liberal and nationalist strands within the Thatcherite approach to Europe has caused tension in several policy areas, notably over tax harmonization, the single currency and immigration. The government has also had to act pragmatically in seeking compromise between the aims of other EC members and British national interests. Britain's relations with her EC partners has also been complicated by the revival of the "special relationship" between Britain and the United States under the auspices of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, adding renewed vigour to the debate between Atlanticists and Euro-enthusiasts.

The policies and attitudes of the Conservative governments towards developments in the EC can usefully be divided into four main phases:

(i) 1979-1984: dominated by the determination of the Thatcher governments to achieve a satisfactory settlement of the budgetary dispute. After several failed attempts at solving the budgetary issue, a compromise was reached at the June 1984 Fontainebleau Conference, which Thatcher presented as a victory for Britain. During this period Britain was often isolated, suffering from her late entry into the Community, trying to modify EC budgetary mechanisms and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to suit British interests.

(ii) 1984-1988: in which the Single European Act with its proposals for the establishment of a single market by the start of 1993 was the dominant theme. In this period, Britain moved towards a more central and constructive role in the formulation of proposals for the future development of the EC, including the British Presidency. This phase also saw the clearest link between the British governments vision of the future direction of the EC and actual developments in the Community, with the creation of the internal market as an extension of Thatcherism's domestic economic liberalism.

(iii) 1988-1990: in which the Thatcher government became increasingly isolated within the Community because of the Prime Minister's opposition to proposals for deeper European integration. The seeds of the moves towards EMU and Political Union were contained within the SEA and were discussed at the June 1988 Hanover Summit and in the 1989 Delors Report. Thatcher's political rhetoric in this period focused on sovereignty and national identity, especially in her September 1988 Bruges Speech. Splits within the Cabinet developed around the time of the June 1989 Madrid Summit which laid down the conditions for British membership of the ERM. Thatcher's



position became more isolated and ideologically-based, contributing to her eventual downfall in November 1990, by which time Britain had joined the ERM and consented to Inter-Governmental Conferences (IGC's) on EMU and Political Union.

(iv) 1990-1992: in which John Major's premiership promised a more pragmatic approach to EC developments. This involved a more pronounced desire for compromise, coupled with determined opposition to the imposition of a single currency, the social charter and talk of a federal destiny. Conservative Party divisions intensified as the twin ICGs on EMU and Political Union got underway. At the crucial Maastricht Summit in December 1991, Major negotiated an opt-in clause on the single currency and a protocol on the Social Chapter, but signed a treaty recognizing EMU and political union as an ultimate goal.

#### Phase One: Budgetary Disputes, 1979-1984.

On assuming office, the priorities of the Thatcher government with regard to the EC were to reduce the net contribution of Britain to the Community, get a significant budget rebate and restructure the CAP to bring it more into accord with British interests. The hard-line position taken by Thatcher alienated her EC colleagues, with Britain unwilling to compromise over her demands for a long-term structured solution rather than a single lump-sum rebate. At her first European Council in Strasbourg in June 1979, Thatcher clashed with the French and Germans who offered only a small one-off payment, then she caused unease in Dublin by stating her intention to "get our money back".



The budget dispute was to last until a final agreement at Fontainebleau in 1984, during which times several attempts at compromise failed and Britain became more isolated in a stagnant and near-bankrupt Community. In 1980 the Conservative Government linked demands for a rebate and restructured budgetary system with CAP price-fixing, blocking 1980 attempts at price-fixing. On this particular problem, the Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington negotiated a three-year deal by which the UK would get back two-thirds of the net contribution for 1980/81. Other member states were unenthusiastic about British proposals for reform of the CAP, the differences coming to the fore in May 1982 when Britain's attempts to invoke the "Luxembourg compromise" were defeated. The "Luxembourg Compromise" was a mechanism for allowing one member to effectively veto an act which it deemed to be against its vital national interests, but on this occasion other members refused to accept the validity of this British claim and overturned it.

In 1983 Thatcher linked the settlement of the budget dispute with the EC's own proposals for an increase in the 1% level of the VAT contribution of each member state in order to improve the tenuous financial position of the Community brought about by the spiralling costs of the CAP. The 1983 Stuttgart Declaration proved to be something of a turning-point as France in particular came to see the British budget problem as an urgent issue and one which could be related to future EC developments in order to achieve compromise and keep pressure on Britain. Here the EC members sought to look to possible future developments, issuing a "Solemn Declaration" on a relaunch of a more dynamic and integrated European Community. After French and then

German compromise proposals were put forward, it became clear that the end agreement would link the UK budget dispute with VAT contributions.

The June 1984 Fontainebleau meeting thus laid out the terms of the budget agreement, producing a formula whereby Britain was to receive an annual rebate amounting to 66% of the gap between its total VAT contribution and the level of EC spending in the UK.<sup>4</sup> This agreement was close to the initial British demands of 1980 that contributions should be linked to EC expenditure in Britain, and it also produced an automatic formula rather than a series of negotiations over future rebates. At the same time the VAT contribution rate was raised to 1.4% with Britain exempt under the terms of the Fontainebleau declaration. However concessions had been made by the British over the size of the cash rebate and would be made again later in the year with the granting of a one billion ecu supplementary budget. (Butler, 1986; Allen, 1988; George, 1990.)

Domestically, Thatcher presented the budgetary settlement as a British victory, despite these significant concessions. Using the rhetoric of national interest, she portrayed Britain as standing firm to win its case against the structural bias of the EC. Thatcher's aggressive stance was a cause of concern to her Community partners and was criticized at home by the Opposition parties and pro-European Conservatives, but her lone and protracted struggle against the EC enhanced her image as a resolute leader fighting Britain's corner in a Community for which public opinion had little sympathy. But British problems with the structural arrangements of the EC were nothing new. The country's late entry meant that the Common Agricultural Policy and budgetary arrangements had been framed so as to



meet the interests of founder members whose agricultural systems were less efficient than Britain's. The recession and Britain's relative decline meant that her contributions to the EC no longer reflected her economic standing in the Community. The budgetary dispute was in some respects merely a continuation of the "renegotiation" campaign of the 1970s when Wilson also claimed his 1975 budgetary agreement as a victory for Britain although it left many problems unaddressed. (George, 1990).

Thatcherism's emphasis on a free market strategy and the desirability of limiting the excesses of inefficient bureaucratic arrangements is evident in the British stance on the budgetary dispute. The Conservative government insisted on financial discipline in the Community to match its domestic policy of limiting public expenditure. Thatcher pointed to the inefficiency of the Common Agricultural Policy, with its high subsidies and food mountains, and the unaccountability of EC bureaucracy. Thus as the EC lurched closer to financial crisis Thatcher sought tighter budgetary regulations and a reform of the CAP. The CAP absorbs about two-thirds of the EC budget but is notoriously inefficient, creating surpluses and causing land abandonment. Its main beneficiaries are small farms, meaning that less efficient French farming does better out of the CAP than British farmers. The CAP later became a major cause of tensions in the Uruguay Round of GATT talks on free trade and tariffs. The more liberal EC states such as the British and Dutch find themselves in a difficult position, supporting free trade but locked into a system of agricultural subsidies. Vested interests make reform of the CAP extremely difficult, but dairy quotas introduced in 1984 and production stabilizers in 1988 added some restraining and stabilizing mechanisms.<sup>5</sup> British concern for structural reform in this first phase



though did not include any wholesale alteration of the EC's decision-making procedures, with Thatcher keen to prevent further centralization or the perceived loss of national sovereignty to European institutions.

The EC as a whole appeared to have lost its way in the early 1980s, but the Fontainebleau agreement was in many ways a watershed, allowing Britain to play a more constructive role in the Community and strengthening the determination of other member states to set a more dynamic agenda for the future. The 1983 Stuttgart "Solemn Declaration" on European Union planned a "relaunch" of the EC, taking in the settlement of the British budgetary dispute, but also referring to developments on European Union and institutional reform. The British government was worried by such proposals and by the European Parliament's February 1984 Draft Treaty on European Union (EUT). Having reached agreement on her budgetary contributions, Britain began to play a leading role in encouraging progress towards the internal market and on greater co-operation in foreign policy, revealing her vision in the "Europe-The Future" paper presented at Fontainebleau. At the same time, Britain was hoping to prevent other member states from forcing the pace on institutional reform and European integration.

#### Phase Two: Towards a Single Market, 1984-1988.

The Fontainebleau European Council in June 1984 was a turning-point in the affairs of the EC, settling the British budgetary dispute and moving the Community towards a more dynamic future. The Council continued to build on the impetus provided by the Stuttgart Declaration and the European Parliament's Draft Treaty on European Union, setting up the Ad Hoc Committee

for Institutional Affairs which became known as the Dooge Committee. The Dooge Report sought the creation of a homogeneous economic area to be achieved through the creation of an internal market, the promotion of economic convergence and the strengthening of the EMS (Lodge, 1986). Britain was by now playing a more central role in EC negotiations, being a prime mover on the creation of the internal market, but opposing institutional developments which went beyond this. On the Dooge Committee, Malcom Rifkind, the British representative adopted a positive approach to the internal market and to the extension of co-operation on foreign policy, but opposed plans for the extension of majority voting, insisting on unanimous agreement where vital national interests were at stake.

Two European Council meetings in 1985, at Milan in June and Luxembourg in December, brought real progress on the proposals for an internal market. At the Milan Council, Britain maintained its enthusiasm for economic liberalization and foreign policy co-operation, as revealed in Howe's Stresa proposals. Cecchini's report on the internal market outlined the benefits of the single market to the EC, while the British Commissioner Lord Cockfield produced a White Paper establishing a timetable for the process and listing over 300 legislative matters needed for the single market to come into effect. Though generally supportive of these proposals, at Milan the British delegation was outmanoeuvred when the Council agreed to the establishment of an IGC to discuss treaty amendments. The IGC proposals were subsequently discussed at the Luxembourg Council later in the year, and after difficult negotiations and some important concessions by all parties, agreement was reached on the Single European Act (SEA).<sup>6</sup> Britain expressed reservations



in several key areas,including social affairs,monetary union, institutional reform and majority voting.The government compromised on several areas, accepting a revision of the Treaty of Rome,plus mention of the EMS and European Union as a long term aim in the SEA.The SEA also replaced the need for unanimity in decision-making with qualified majority voting,though concessions to the UK were made in providing for unanimity in certain cases of major national interest.Although the powers of the European Parliament were increased,the changes were minor and the SEA did not bring the major shift to co-decision which had been urged in the Draft Treaty on European Union.

This second period in the relations between the Thatcher governments and the EC,with the Single European Act as its centrepiece,was one of mixed success for the British position.Britain moved to a more constructive role in charting the development of the Community,but the nature of decision-making among member states means that any one state is unlikely to be able to achieve all its ideological or strategic objectives.Helen Wallace notes the importance of negotiations and coalition-forming in Community on EC affairs,effectively meaning that all negotiating positions must be open to compromise (H.Wallace,1985).The budgetary dispute era had been one of British isolation and inflexibility,while in this second period the government actively sought support for economic liberalization and foreign policy co-operation.At the Milan and Luxembourg Councils,the British also formed useful alliances with other members to limit the scope of integration and institutional change.However,as with the budgetary settlement,compromise and defeats in some areas were inevitable.Of longer term significance was the move away from unanimimty,which was welcomed on



the completion of the internal market, but also meant that the power and influence of a government would be considerably reduced if it was in a minority, adversely affecting democratic accountability.

Much of the 1992 internal market project ties in with the aims and vision of the Thatcher governments. The creation of an internal market was one of the express aims of the Treaty of Rome but developments beyond this have been opposed by the Conservative government eager to prevent centralization and a loss of British decision-making capability. The 1992 single market programme aims to create a free, internal market in which physical barriers (eg customs controls), technical barriers (eg conflicting business laws) and fiscal barriers (eg differing rates of excise duty) are removed (Cecchini, 1988; Owen & Dynes, 1989).<sup>7</sup> By the start of 1993 the liberalization of capital, financial transactions and the movement of goods and services should have been achieved if the measures outlined by Lord Cockfield have been adhered to. This economic liberalization is consistent with Thatcherism's domestic strategy of increasing competition and giving the market a greater role in determining the success of businesses. The internal market project has also attracted the support of core elite groups in the City and in British industry. The financial "Big Bang" in the City of London had liberalized financial arrangements and the government was keen to ensure that London would retain its place as Europe's major financial market. As recession eased in this period, with British industry emerging more streamlined and competitive, the aims of the SEA seemed to favour British economic interests.

The approach of the Thatcher government towards the single market mixed the strategic-ideological pillars of neo-liberalism and national sovereignty with British economic interests (primarily those of the City) and pragmatic compromise over the more detailed proposals of the SEA. The British Presidency in 1986 saw general British enthusiasm for the freeing of the internal market, but the need to compromise with other member states who placed more emphasis on the role of trade unions than did the British neo-liberal account of employment and job creation. Some neo-liberal, free market areas within the 1992 project, such as initial plans for tax harmonization and the removal of border controls, were opposed illustrating how the pragmatic defence of national interests could override proposals which were ideologically consistent with free-market economics. In the case of proposed tax harmonization in the single market, the British government refused to compromise over its zero VAT rating of certain goods such as food and children's clothes. Agreement was eventually reached whereby two different VAT bands would be retained and market harmonization would be aimed only at a minimum standard on goods rather than stricter controls.<sup>2</sup> British opposition to the removal of border controls remains, based on fears of terrorism, loss of immigration control and the spread of rabies.

The Conservative view depicts the Treaty of Rome as a "charter for economic liberty" with the aims of the 1992 project to be limited accordingly. Britain has been near the fore in implementing the changes indicated by Cockfield's White Paper, and the government has been critical of those member states looking to further integration before implementing the changes needed for the completion of the internal market. Measures which extend Community competence, especially in the social sphere but also on



technological co-ordination, EC structural funds and environmental directives, are criticized for bringing centralization and interference by unaccountable and inefficient bureaucracy into areas best left to the market. National interests as well as ideological objections come into play on issues of tax harmonization and the free movement of people, with the government keen to maintain control at national level in these areas. Inherent in the SEA and the internal market project though is a deeper economic and political integration encompassing a European Central Bank, a single currency and Community-imposed immigration rules.

The British government has tended to oppose institutional change within the EC as part of its general opposition to European integration, preferring a gradual, evolutionary of EC institutions, and one consistent with a view of the nation-state as the optimal area of decision-making (Judge, 1986). Britain thus opposed the Dooge Committee plans for extended majority voting and co-decision between the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers. The Thatcher governments have opposed attempts at increasing the scope and powers of the EP, arguing that they are incompatible with Britain's traditional parliamentary sovereignty.

One area in which the British government has consistently played a leading role is in moves towards Political Co-operation whereby the foreign policies of the various member states are more closely linked. This reveals the greater European dimension in British foreign policy, though Britain has been a staunch supporter of the NATO Alliance and maintains a strong relationship with the United States. Political Co-operation has involved a closer co-ordination of the foreign policies of the EC member states, rather



than a common foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> On certain issues the Community has been able to take a united policy position (eg the Venice Declaration on the Middle East in 1980) but differences in national perspectives on foreign affairs frequently come to the fore (eg over the Falklands War or the American bombing of Libya). Foreign Secretaries Carrington and Hurd were eager to promote a more integrated foreign policy approach by the EC (Hurd,1981) but were less supportive of proposals for an integrated EC defence policy. The UK has also pressed for a liberal trade policy fearing the alternative scenario of a protectionist Community. Following the reforms in Eastern Europe, Britain has urged an enlargement of the Community (including EFTA states) to form a wider, looser union of European states.

#### Phase Three: "Ever Closer Union", 1988-1990.

The "negative integration" or removal of internal barriers supported by the Thatcher governments and set out in the 1992 single market programme was rapidly superseded by moves towards "positive integration" involving economic, monetary and political union, which the Thatcher governments opposed. The Hanover Summit of June 1988 and the Delors Report of April 1989 brought the issues of economic and monetary union, with their associated proposals for a single currency and a Central European Bank, to the forefront of the EC agenda, provoking much opposition from the British government and Mrs Thatcher in particular. During this period, the Thatcherite Euro-sceptics in the Conservative Party became increasingly vocal in their opposition to proposals for further economic, monetary and political union. Thatcher set the tone of British hostility to integration and federalism in her Bruges Speech of September 1988. As moves towards EMU gathered pace,

the tension in the government and the party deepened. At the June 1989 Madrid Summit, Howe and Lawson succeeded in manoeuvring Thatcher into laying down specific conditions for British entry into the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) of the European Monetary System (EMS). Britain joined the ERM in October 1990, by which time Thatcher was becoming more strident in her opposition to EMU, becoming progressively more isolated in the Community and in the Conservative Party, creating the conditions for her downfall. The period is then one of increasingly desperate British attempts to frustrate the progress towards EMU desired by her EC partners, and of rising domestic interest in policy towards the Community.

At the 1988 Hanover Summit, the French and German governments sought to build on the SEA, which had proclaimed the objective of "progressive realization of economic and monetary union", by putting forward proposals for a single currency and central bank. The June 1989 Madrid Summit saw a number of conditions laid down by Thatcher, under pressure from Lawson and Howe, for determining the timing of British entry to the ERM. These conditions were (i) a significant reduction in the rate of British inflation, (ii) further capital liberalization in the EC; (iii) real progress towards the single market, freedom of financial services and strengthened competition policy. In fact these conditions were largely ignored in the eventual timing of British entry as inflation was high, though the government claimed that the underlying inflationary trend was downwards.

Britain finally joined the ERM in October 1990 having placed British currency reserves in the European Monetary System in 1979.<sup>10</sup> In Autumn 1985 Chancellor Nigel Lawson had proposed entry into the ERM at a level of



DM 3.75, but was vetoed by Thatcher who favoured a floating currency. However in February 1987 Lawson began a policy of shadowing the Deutschmark at a central rate of DM 2.93 with a 2.25% margin, effectively following the conditions which would have been laid down if Britain had joined the ERM at that stage. This shadowing policy was criticized by Sir Alan Walters, Mrs Thatcher's economic adviser. In March 1988 Thatcher forced Lawson to abandon the shadowing of the DM, adding to the disagreements about European policy in the Cabinet and the Conservative Party. The expected economic boom on ERM entry didn't materialize and fears of devaluation persisted as the value of the pound hovered in the lower margins of the ERM bands. The devaluation issue gathered momentum within the Conservative Party in the recession of the early 1990s as Tory Euro-sceptics argued that ERM constraints were preventing the interest rate cuts needed for swifter economic recovery.<sup>11</sup>

The report of the Committee for the Study of Economic and Monetary Union, known as the Delors Report, set out four components of economic union: a single market; competition policy; common policies for structural and regional development; plus macro-economic budgetary policy co-ordination.<sup>12</sup> The first three of these fell within the scope of the SEA's 1992 programme and were consistent with the British government's preferred free market strategy. The Report's more controversial proposals, and those most vehemently opposed by the Thatcher government, recommended that central budgetary authority be given to a European body and that a European System of Central Banks be established to design monetary policy and manage exchange rate (Thygesen, 1989). The report proposes three stages towards monetary union, only the first of which was accepted by the British. This



first stage involves merely voluntary co-ordination of monetary policy and was adopted by the 1989 Madrid Summit. Under Stage Two of the Delors proposals, "soft" monetary union would be brought about by the linking of national central banks, giving limited powers to a European Bank. Stage Three would then bring hard monetary union with a dominant European Central Bank and locked exchange rates. A single currency is seen as a desirable but not inevitable extension of the process of monetary union.

The Thatcher government rejected the Delors proposals for economic and monetary union, was unenthusiastic about the ERM, and firmly opposed a single currency and central bank. As a Conservative Party policy document of the time states:

"The overriding concern of the Government is that stages two and three of the Delors' Committee Report would entail a fundamental transfer of sovereignty away from Parliament at Westminster. The Delors proposals for a common European currency, a single central bank and a common monetary policy would remove national governments' control over their economic policies. This would have far reaching implications for Britain's sovereignty and the role of Parliament." (CPC Politics Today, April 1990, p.146).

The government instead stresses the importance of markets and competition, the key objective of price stability and the need to retain national control over economic policy making. In the House Of Commons debate on economic and monetary union in November 1989, Chancellor John Major attacked the centralizing tendencies of the Delors proposals which made no allowances for political accountability and eroded the sovereign decision-making powers of the British government and Parliament. Major was looking for a market approach in his government paper "An Evolutionary Approach to Economic and Monetary Union".<sup>13</sup>

Under the Major proposals EC monetary policies would harmonize at their optimum level and currencies would effectively become interchangeable. National currencies would remain and economic decision-making would stay at national level, with the market determining any pragmatic moves towards monetary union. Major's proposals were for the development of the "hard ecu" as a twelfth EC currency which if successful in the exchange markets could in time evolve into a single currency. As Major said in the Commons' debate on entry into the ERM in October 1990:

"There has been no shift, no weakening in our opposition to the imposition of a single currency and a single monetary authority. We shall continue to advocate our plans for the development of the hard ecu. We believe that our proposals are practical, evolutionary and based on markets and choice. They leave open the possibility of the hard ecu evolving towards a parallel currency and then a single currency, but only if that were the wish of governments and peoples." (Hansard, issue 1534, columns 195-291).

Major's "hard ecu" plan did not meet with any great enthusiasm from other EC leaders or from the Governor of the German Bundesbank. Much of this can be put down to Britain's isolation on the issues of economic and monetary union, with the other states forging on ahead regardless of British intransigence. The clear opposition of Mrs Thatcher to even an evolutionary development of a single currency also weakened the credibility of the Major Plan. However in his first EC meetings as Prime Minister, Major persisted with his "hard ecu" plan, calling for a European Monetary Fund to ensure price stability, but it was dismissed by the EC in the build up to the Maastricht summit.

The final weeks of Mrs Thatcher's premiership were marked by growing disputes within the Conservative Party and among her ministers about



developments in the EC, with her personal position being firmer and more vocal in its opposition to a single currency and Central Bank. At the Rome Summit in November 1990 Thatcher was again left isolated as the eleven other heads of government agreed on moves towards economic and monetary union. The communique noted agreement by all but Britain on the creation of a central monetary authority with independent powers and full responsibility for monetary policy. A single currency was to be the ultimate aim. The second phase of economic and monetary union was to begin with the creation of the single market, bringing progress towards monetary convergence with a third stage and single currency predicted by the turn of the century. Thatcher's response in the Commons was adamant about the need to preserve British sovereignty over economic and monetary policy, culminating in her unscripted "No.No.No." to Delors' plans for powerful, centralized EC institutions.

#### Phase Four: Major's Road to Maastricht, 1990-1992.

John Major faced a difficult task on becoming Prime Minister just weeks before the December 1990 Rome Inter-Governmental Conference when decisions on the "menu" for discussions on EMU and political union were due to be taken. At the time of Thatcher's fall from power, Britain was isolated on the issues facing the twin IGCs. Thatcher had made explicit her belief that the EC had gone as far as it should down the road towards European Union. Her "no, no, no" to the single currency, European Central Bank and deeper political union undermined Britain's role in the Community. According to the Thatcher line, the point at which Britain would go no further had been reached, implying that in future she would resort to using the British veto rather



than seek compromise or constructive dialogue. The signals reaching the other EC member states were that the period of pragmatism had ended to be replaced by an ideological strategy in which national sovereignty would be defended against future Community developments.

Major's task was to restore Britain's position as a constructive member of the Community, while not abandoning the legal reservations or concerns that his government also had. His strategy was one more readily in keeping with the Community style: his government offered its own proposals, was prepared to negotiate and seek compromise where possible, but had a list of measures on which the UK felt it was impossible to compromise. Most of 1991 was taken up with difficult and protracted negotiations plus coalition-making aimed at giving the UK the maximum possible influence. A pragmatic willingness to compromise over aspects of EMU, defence and foreign policy, plus political union restored respect for British anxieties and made trade-offs to ensure that Britain got its way on the key issues more likely. Added to Major's European anxieties was the need to avoid deepening the split in the Conservative Party between the Euro-enthusiasts and the increasingly vocal Euro-sceptics, with Thatcher added to the ranks of the latter as a thorn in the government's side.

This strategic mix of pragmatic compromise and ideological determination first surfaced at the Rome IGC in December 1990 when fellow EC members noted a change in the British tone, but little alteration in her ultimate policy platform: a shift in style rather than substance. Major entered the Rome IGC knowing that there was a consensus among the other

member states on the desirability of rapid moves towards EMU and a political union with a decidedly federal character. Britain though was able to join her partners in signing the Rome communique which agreed to formally open the twin IGCs on EMU and political union, while reaffirming the Community's commitments to social policies in the internal market. Major did so because of the concessions won in several areas, meaning that Britain's preferred options on monetary union (based on his "hard ecu" plan) and political union (envisaging more intergovernmental co-operation outside the scope of the Treaty of Rome) were added to the IGCs' discussion agendas, allowing the government to buy more time to further its negotiating and coalition-building strategy. Major's more positive attitude towards the EC pleased the other EC governments and established an atmosphere of constructive compromise rather than obstructive stonewalling.

Having established an atmosphere of constructive dialogue, the Major government spent 1991 trying to reach a deal which would satisfy both the more federally-inclined governments and the different groupings at odds on European issues in the Conservative Party. The government offered a formal version of its "hard ecu" plan in its Draft Treaty in January 1991, including plans for a European Monetary Fund administering the ERM and hard ecu, as well as participating in devaluation decisions with the overall aim of ensuring price stability.<sup>14</sup> Although Thatcher had identified EMU as a step too far for British sovereignty and national interests, the Major government soon signalled their willingness to sign a deal, providing it incorporated an opt-out clause allowing the UK to decide at a later date both whether and when to join a single currency. Major and Lamont also insisted on a high level of economic convergence between EC states as a prerequisite for moves



beyond the transitional second phase into the third phase of EMU which included the creation of the single currency and single monetary policy under the auspices of a European Central Bank.

The opt-out clause for the UK was first mooted as a means of ensuring a deal on EMU acceptable to the Major government in the "Delors Compromise" in June 1991. Lamont and Major indicated that the UK would not veto a treaty on EMU containing such an opt-out clause, allowing other states to go ahead with a single currency. Thatcher's comments on EMU in her last weeks in office, after her isolation at the October 1990 Rome Summit, had implied that she would use the veto to prevent other members moving towards EMU, and prominent Euro-sceptics like Nicholas Ridley argued that this was still the best option available to the government. Major had not completely abandoned the Thatcher stance, vigorously opposing "the imposition of a single currency" and moves which adversely affected the national interest and undermined the commitment to free market principles. The preferred option was the evolution of the "hard ecu" as a common rather than single currency, but the original "hard ecu" plan was soon modified so that the hard ecu would be part of a transitional phase on the road to a single currency. At the Luxembourg Summit in June 1991, Britain emphasized the need for economic convergence rather than fixed timetables for EMU. Major maintained the legal reserve on the EMU treaty, but the expectations were of compromise. Though rejecting the Dutch Draft Treaties, Lamont indicated that EMU would happen and looked for convergence and the agreement of eight EC states before the third stage could begin. <sup>15</sup>



In the run-up to the Maastricht Summit, then, the British government had indicated its willingness to sign an EMU treaty which offered Britain an opt-out clause, despite some vocal opposition among the more hard-line Euro-sceptics in his party. In the Commons debate on the government's negotiating position in November 1991, Major outlined his strategy, noting that Thatcher had committed the country to "the progressive realization of Economic and Monetary Union" by signing the SEA. He stressed the government's commitment to Stages One and Two, but argued that Stage Three would require a high level of economic convergence. On the single currency and opt-out compromise he stated that Britain would not commit herself now.

"A single currency could be the means of safeguarding anti-inflationary policies for the whole of the European Community. That would be a great prize. But the House knows there is a price to pay for that prize. The price is that it would take from national governments the control of monetary policy. That would be a very significant political and economic step for Britain to take. We cannot take that step now. But nor should we exclude it." (Hansard, vol. 199, no. 13, col. 274).

At Maastricht Major duly secured an opt-out clause, but one specifically aimed at the UK. Under the terms of the clause, the UK is not compelled to sign up for the single currency without a separate decision by her government and Parliament.<sup>16</sup> Britain agreed to the text on the second stage and conceded ground by signing a separate protocol declaring the "irreversible character of the movement to the Third Stage", and agreeing to "respect the will of the Community to enter swiftly into the Third Stage of EMU". During the Second Stage, Britain will act as if she were going to enter the final stage by being bound to protocol commitments on excessive deficit and the hardening and irrevocable fixing of the ecu. Major would not though say whether he believed Britain would eventually join a single currency and

single monetary policy. On EMU then Major left Maastricht having secured his priority, an opt-out clause for the UK, but had moved well beyond the Thatcherite stance by signing a treaty and legally recognizing the inevitability of the EMU process.

The road to agreement on a political union treaty at Maastricht proved more difficult, with arguments continuing into the final minutes of the Maastricht summit. The Major government retained the hostility of its predecessor to greatly increased powers for the European Parliament, to the extension of EC competence and qualified majority voting (especially in social affairs and on immigration), and to Franco-German plans to incorporate a common defence and foreign policy within the institutional structure of the EC. Again through negotiations, concessions were made and compromises reached, with the UK accepting an extension of EP powers and of EC competence in its Maastricht strategy. In his presentation of the government's negotiating position to the House of Commons in November 1991, Major objected to "wholesale changes in the nature of the Community which would lead it to an unacceptable dominance over our national life" (Hansard, vol. 199, no. 13, col. 274). But his position on national sovereignty was less strident than Thatcher's, recognizing that an extension of EC powers was inevitable, but should be shaped to meet British interests as far as possible.

The government rejected the radical Dutch Draft Treaty which called for a unitary EC structure on domestic and foreign affairs, and succeeded in removing the references to a "federal vocation" from the Maastricht Treaty. Major's preferred structure was one based on "separate pillars" of inter-

governmental co-operation on foreign policy and domestic affairs, outside of the Treaty of Rome and thus not subject to Commission proposals or the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. At Maastricht, Major was able to avoid the formal incorporation of law and order, foreign policy and defence policy in the EC under the Treaty of Rome, policy on these areas instead being shaped by a legally binding, inter-governmental framework. <sup>17</sup>

On foreign policy Britain secured a national veto on key elements of a joint foreign policy and maintained the freedom of national action. However, as in other areas Britain was forced to accept the extension of qualified majority voting, though leaving the Council of Ministers to unanimously decide in which areas of foreign policy this would apply. On defence, the Anglo-Italian coalition secured the dominant role for NATO in the face of Franco-German proposals for a EC defence corps. The Western European Union (WEU) also remains prominent, with Greece and Denmark invited to join it. However, the UK was forced to accept the strengthening of a "European defence identity" and the eventual integration of the WEU into the EC's institutional structure. <sup>18</sup>

The EC's area of competence was extended by the Maastricht agreement, with the scope of qualified majority voting also increased. Environmental policy though remained outside the Treaty of Rome, and the Major government subsequently ignored EC opposition to several construction projects in the UK. Britain also agreed to increased powers for the EP, another area of compromise, with the Strasbourg Parliament able to veto Council of Ministers' decisions in certain areas. Co-decision was not adopted, but Britain had agreed to the extension of EP legislative powers for the first time.



Britain's proposals for the EP to play a greater role in scrutinising the Commission and auditing EC spending were incorporated into the treaty. The government also conceded on the establishment of a Cohesion Fund for regional aid. On immigration, which Major had wanted left to inter-governmental decisions, Britain again achieved mixed results, with asylum policies being gradually harmonized after 1996, but with increased rights for family members to join immigrants already settled in the EC.

The greatest split on political union came over the issue of the extension of EC competence into social policy in the single market, including EC decisions on working conditions, health and safety, pensions and unemployment, plus trade union rights and collective bargaining. The Delors Social Charter and the Maastricht social chapter were firmly rejected by the Major government for the same reasons as Thatcher had outlined. Major regarded the social chapter as interference in market forces and as damaging to British industry. Though Heath urged British acceptance of the social charter, the vast majority of Conservatives were opposed to the extension of EC competence in this area. Ultimately, Major refused to sign a political union treaty including the social chapter, forcing the other eleven EC states to sign a protocol on social affairs outside the Treaty of Rome.<sup>19</sup> The Opposition claimed Britain was isolated in a lower tier by this and the EMU opt-out. Major though claimed that British industry would benefit from internal investment because of lower costs, and that Britain had already agreed to 19 of the 33 social programme areas already accepted by the Council of Ministers.

In the 1992 general election, the issue of European Union was kept off the agenda by Conservative and Labour strategists eager to disguise internal disputes on the issue which existed in both parties. In the May debate on the Maastricht Treaty, Major argued that he had secured a deal which marked "the point at which, for the first time, Britain has begun to reverse the centralizing trend". His government increasingly stressed the principle of subsidiarity (though its meaning remains disputed), arguing that the Maastricht agreement ensured that decisions would be taken at national level where appropriate. Although 22 Tory MPs voted against the Bill's Second Reading, Labour's decision to abstain on the vote ensured a comfortable government majority. However, the Treaty ran into fresh trouble with the "No" result of the Danish referendum in June, giving Tory Euro-Sceptics fresh ammunition and causing the government to postpone plans for ratification of the Bill just before the British Presidency began. <sup>20</sup>

#### Summary and Conclusions.

European integration is taking place against a background of a decline in the autonomy of the state, but a revival of national identity. The Thatcherite view of sovereignty argues that economic, monetary and political union will bring about an irreversible transfer of decision-making authority from the nation-state to a supranational body. The alternative account presented by Howe defines sovereignty as the capacity for influence a nation-state has in an interdependent world. Integration is thus seen as a means of increasing Britain's scope for effective influence through closer links between EC member states. Both accounts have something useful to contribute to the integration debate, but also contain significant flaws.



State sovereignty cannot be depicted as an absolute in the contemporary world. The capacity of the state to follow an autonomous or independent course of action has been eroded by a trend towards globalization in political and economic affairs. But the state is still the key actor in international relations: the EC's scope for autonomous action is strictly limited for it is a union of states not a federation. It is unhelpful to see sovereignty as absolute and indivisible. The EC's member states have extended their scope of influence and ability to act, while maintaining their independence in many areas. Those who believe that state sovereignty must mean state autonomy ignore the need for and benefits of supranational organizations. An isolated state could preserve its sovereignty, but impotence would be the price to pay.

The Maastricht Treaty however opens up the prospect of a European Union in which important areas of state authority will be lost. The ability of nation-states to take decisions on monetary and fiscal affairs will be limited as a single currency and European Central Bank effectively usher in a Europe wide monetary policy. A permanent convergence of the economies of the EC member states, on which the success of EMU may well depend, seems highly unlikely and there is significant opposition to EMU and political union in several EC member states. On political union, the extension of Community competence and of qualified majority voting threatens to further erode the authority of elected state governments and legislatures. Nation-states may be obliged to accept decisions they opposed in the Council of Ministers. The political community may find itself no longer able to decide upon who should be regarded as a member of the community if immigration matters are formally decided at EC level. Qualified majority voting raises the question of the democratic deficit: how can

an elected government be held responsible for decisions made in the Council of Ministers if it was outvoted ?

Bogdanor and Woodcock suggest that extending democratic accountability to all EC institutions is the most pressing task in the years ahead (Bogdanor & Woodcock, 1991). Stronger links between the national and European parliaments and greater scrutiny of EC directives would be a major element in the democratization of the EC. But the smaller and weaker EC member states will have limited potential for the redress of grievances even if democratic accountability is extended. Popular allegiance to and participation in the EC are lacking at present, but would be important in the longer term. As the Community moves towards Union rather than intergovernmental co-operation the capacity of each individual member state to act independently will decline. A common foreign, defence and immigration policy are on the horizon, but each must take account of the different outlooks and traditions of the member states. If European Union is to be harmonious, nation-states must not be constrained from sometimes following different, but complementary, paths towards closer union where vital national interests or political traditions dictate this. Here the principle of subsidiarity is taken to mean that the nation-state will still play a significant role in decision-making in those cases where a supra-national role is inappropriate.

The EC has limited the British government's scope for action, particularly in the legal sphere where Community law has become part of UK law and takes priority in all but the most extreme cases. Britain has in general benefitted from giving up some of its decision-making authority to the EC, although her late entry has meant that difficult struggles have been needed to alter EC



institutions to meet British interests. European integration will erode the scope for government action still further, but the threat European union poses to national identity has been exaggerated. As yet, there has been little to suggest that the EC is incompatible with strong national identities. The Community itself has been unable to develop an attractive cultural or political identity of its own, while a revival of ethnic nationalisms suggests that national identities are resilient. However, British national identity and sovereignty are linked, especially in conservative thought, because Britain is a parliamentary nation. European Union challenges the British tradition of parliamentary sovereignty, one ill at ease with continental accounts of popular sovereignty and federalism. The traditions and membership of the national community may also be undermined by EC foreign or immigration policies. The process of European integration is beginning to raise the questions of national independence and self-government for perhaps the first time in modern British history.

An examination of government policy towards the EC shows the limitations of the account of Thatcherism as a nationalist doctrine or strategy. In the final weeks of the Thatcher premiership there was certainly a drift in this direction, best illustrated in Thatcher's own unscripted remarks about EMU. However, the overall record of the Thatcher governments suggest that reports of a nationalist strategy are exaggerated. Thatcherism has not been isolationist or protectionist as one would expect from a nationalist strategy. Instead the Thatcher governments were pressing for changes in the EC to meet their vision of an economically liberal EC where key decisions were left at a national level. Problems mounted when the trend towards integration rapidly moved away from the negative integration (the removal of internal barriers) which

Thatcherism felt comfortable with,towards positive integration (political, economic and monetary union).Support for negative integration was the dominant theme of Thatcherite policy (seen in policy on reform of the budgetary process and CAP,the single market and Political Co-operation), but there was also a great deal of government pragmatism made necessary by the EC negotiating processes and its rapidly changing agenda.The Thatcher governments had most influence over EC policy-making when there was general agreement on the direction of the Community,notably on the desirability of the internal market. But Thatcherite influence was weakened by its distrust of the EC negotiating process,its hardline stance aimed at changing EC institutions to meet British objectives,and key differences between Britain and her partners over their visions of European integration.

Policy towards the EC in the Thatcher years was not primarily dictated by nationalist doctrine.Thatcherism was not a coherent nationalist strategy, although it successfully exploited nationalist themes when British interests were at stake or when the EC moved in the direction of EMU which was Thatcher's *bête noire*.By signing the SEA,with its clauses promising moves towards EMU,Thatcher assented to a further erosion of the sovereignty she vigorously defended in her final weeks in office.Pragmatic considerations, the need for negotiation and coalition-making,plus pressure from Cabinet colleagues and the Foreign Office,all prevented Thatcher from following the nationalist style suggested in October 1990 and after.Public opinion on the Community and Thatcher's policy fluctuated from widespread support for her "Britain first" attitude in the budgetary dispute,to heavy electoral losses in the 1989 European elections when the Conservatives ran a Euro-sceptic campaign.Public



uncertainty continued in the early 1990s during the debates on economic, monetary and political union.

The tension between Thatcherism's neo-liberal economics and its nationalist rhetoric was another key factor preventing the emergence of a coherent nationalist doctrine. In defending the primacy of the nation-state and defending national interests against any extension of Community competence, Thatcherism expresses itself in a Gaullist tone. Both are ideological supporters of the nation-state and opponents of EC federalism. But Thatcherism's neo-liberal economics and support for the internal market suggest that the economic role of the nation-state will decline. Support for the internal market is based on Thatcherism's preference for market rather than state action, but the nation-state itself is the main barrier to a truly free European market or a level-playing field (Sharpe, 1989, p. 234; Willets, 1992, pp. 170-3). Instead of following neo-liberal theory to its ultimate conclusions about the incompatibility of the nation-state with the free market, Thatcherism upheld the role of the nation-state by opposing tax harmonization, a single currency and the social charter. But Thatcherism also followed market-led policies which were not always compatible with the national interest eg not acting to protect the UK's coal or manufacturing industries, and encouraging foreign investment in British industries. The 1992 programme saw the Department of Trade and Industry encouraging British industry to become more competitive, but there has not been the sort of strategic partnership between government and industry envisaged by technocratic Euro-enthusiasts like Michael Heseltine.

The Maastricht treaty testifies to the shift away from the ideological opposition to positive integration of Thatcher's final weeks in power, but the

Major government retains significant doubts about European Union. It is by no means certain that the Maastricht agreement will hold for doubts about its benefits are surfacing in Germany and France, while the process of integration will itself raise problems of convergence, structural aid and the possibility of a two-tier Europe developing with the single currency.

In the next chapter I will examine the domestic factors affecting Thatcherite policy on the EC by looking at tensions between Euro-sceptics and Euro-enthusiasts in the Conservative Party.

#### Footnotes:

1. See also Sir Geoffrey Howe: "The European Communities Act, 1971", in *International Affairs*, vol. 49, 1973. pp. 1-13.
2. On the fluctuations in British public opinion on the EC see Patrick Dunleavy, Helen Margetts & Stuart Weir: "The Making of a Euro-Brit" in *The Guardian*, 19th June 1991. The article notes a period of negative reaction to the EC between 1977 and 1984, but a trend towards positive identification since 1985.
3. On the Heath government and the EC see Nigel Ashford: "*The Conservative Party and European Integration, 1945-1975*", Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1983.
4. European Communities Treaty Series no. 24 (1984) "Developments in the European Community, January - June 1984" London: HMSO. Cmd. 9348. pp. 37-40.
5. In 1992 agreement was reached on reform of the CAP under which farm subsidies would be reduced, the amounts paid to farmers reduced, and land taken out of production. On these MacSharry reforms see *The Guardian*, 22nd May 1992 and *The Economist* Survey on the EC, July 17th 1992..
6. European Communities Treaty Series no. 12 (1986) "The Single European Act and Final Act, Luxembourg 17th February 1986 and The Hague 28th February 1986" London: HMSO. Cmd. 9758.
7. Cmd. 9758, pp. 8-11.
8. The British Government agreed to an EC minimum VAT rate of 15% in July 1992, allowing the EC to set tax rates. This reversed earlier British opposition to VAT harmonization, though significant exemptions remain and the



agreement only covers a four year period. See *The Guardian*, 28th/29th July 1992.

9.Cmnd.9758, pp.19-22.

10.European Communities Treaty Series no.21 (1991) "Developments in the European Community, July - December 1991" London:HMSO. CM.1457.

11.On Tory calls for devaluation or withdrawal from the ERM see Nicholas Budgen: "Heads You Lose,Tails You Lose" in *The Guardian*, 6th January 1992. and his "Making Our Own Mark" in *The Guardian*, 14th July 1992.

12.Report of the Committee for the Study of Economic and Monetary Union.

13.HM Treasury,1989 and European Communities Treaty Series no.17 (1990) "Developments in the European Community, July - December 1989" London:HMSO CM.1023.

14.*The Guardian*, 9th January 1991.

15.On the publication then rejection of the Dutch Draft Treaty in favour of a compromise version of the Luxembourg Draft see *The Guardian*, 25th September 1991 & 1st October 1991.

16.European Communities Treaty Series no.3 (1992) "Treaty on European Union including the Protocols and Final Act with Declarations, Maastricht 7th February 1992" London:HMSO. CM.1934. On EMU see pp.17-30; for the British opt-out protocol see pp.114-116. Comment and analysis on the Maastricht Treaty can be found in *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times*, December 9th - December 11th 1991.

17.CM.1934, pp.80-87.

18.CM.1934, pp.131-133.

19.CM.1934, pp.117-120.

20.On the Danish referendum and its implications,see *The Guardian*, June 4th & 5th 1992.France was due to hold a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty on 20th September 1992 with a close result predicted.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

The Conservatives have never enjoyed unanimous internal support for official party policy on Britain's relations with the EC. The parliamentary party has contained a hard-core of Euro-sceptics, prepared to vote against the official party position both in government and opposition, since the decision to seek membership of the Community was first made. A significant number of Tory MPs ignored the Heath government's three-line whip to vote against the 1972 European Communities Act, and then campaigned for a No vote in the 1975 referendum. Enoch Powell left the Conservative Party because of its pro-Community platform, but many Euro-sceptics remained on the backbenches, respected for their principled stance, but having little practical influence on party policy. The friction within the parliamentary party eased as EC issues dropped down the political agenda, but re-emerged in the late 1980s when the gathering pace of European integration fuelled intra-party tensions. The party was publicly perceived as divided over EC policy by 1990 as the dispute unseated senior Cabinet ministers and ultimately contributed to Mrs Thatcher's downfall. John Major's task was to find a policy which would appease both sides of the Tory Party and be acceptable to Britain's Community partners.

Different attitudes towards the EC within the Conservative Party are, broadly speaking, grouped around two camps: the Euro-sceptics and the Euro-enthusiasts. However, differences of opinion exist within these rival camps. These are not well-organized factions of ideologically-allied following a specific strategy, but are loose groupings of like-minded MPs, sharing a



general positive or negative opinion on European integration. Membership of the two camps is difficult to accurately quantify because many MPs tend to follow a pragmatic course, supporting loosely-defined official policy rather than voting against the government. The scale of the internal dispute was heightened in the final phase of Thatcher's premiership. The resignations and stated positions of Lawson, Ridley, Howe and Thatcher revealed deep divisions in the Cabinet, while the polarization of the parliamentary party gathered pace as backbench Tories publicly affiliated themselves to the rival camps.

The Euro-sceptic and Euro-enthusiast camps are not ideological factions in a strict sense, each camp acting instead as a loose coalition of attitudes and containing significant internal differences of opinion about the desirability of European integration and the optimal strategy for the government to pursue. In an article written as intra-party tension on the issue was in the ascendancy, Andrew Gamble identified two main camps, the "federalists" and the "nationalists", with both of these containing further sub-groupings (Gamble, 1990). These titles though exaggerate the ideological basis of the rival camps: few Euro-enthusiasts are fully-fledged federalists, while only the most Powellite of Euro-sceptics offer anything approaching a coherently nationalist platform. The article further divides these two camps into another three sub-groupings per camp. The Euro-sceptic, "nationalist" wing thus contains:

- (i) isolationists, who favour withdrawal from the EC as the only means of restoring British sovereignty;
- (ii) Atlanticists, who focus on defence and security and regard NATO and the United States as the principle pillars of British foreign policy;

(iii) market liberals, who oppose further integration because it erodes economic sovereignty.

The Euro-enthusiast,"federalist" wing also has three sub-groupings:

(i) unionists, who favour rapid moves towards a united Europe;

(ii) realists, who are essentially pragmatic, seeking to maximize Britain's influence within the EC but having significant reservations about the speed and scope of the integration process;

(iii) market liberals, who regard further integration as a natural and desirable result of the SEA.

This breakdown reveals the pitfalls involved in faction-spotting: key individuals like Heseltine or Major cannot easily be pigeonholed into these categories, and the dividing line between them is often blurred. Realist cannot be classified as federalists either. Later in this chapter I will look at the position of the more significant Euro-sceptics (Thatcher, Ridley, Tebbit et al) and Euro-enthusiasts (Heath, Heseltine etc), noting the differences in opinion on major issues between and within the two camps. Though the ideological positions of some key players may be significant, pragmatism seems to be an overriding feature in the stance of the majority of Conservative MPs. Philip Norton's survey of the ideological position of every Conservative MP in 1990 indicated the pitfalls which those who categorize party factions must be wary of (Norton, 1990). Norton identified seven categories in the party, but the ideological groupings (the Thatcherites, either neo-liberal or Tory Right; and to a lesser extent the Critics, either "wet" or "damp") make up only a small proportion of the parliamentary party. By far the largest grouping was the loyal "party



faithful" (217 MPs or 58% of the party) who support the party and the leader through loyalty rather than ideological accord. It was the declining confidence of these crucial members which ultimately determined the timing of Thatcher's departure. Norton's conclusion is then that the parliamentary Conservative Party is neither significantly ideological nor Thatcherite. The relevance of Norton's findings for attempts at faction-spotting on European policy are clear. Few Conservative MPs can be confidently pigeonholed on this issue, while an analysis of the Commons debates on the Single European Act in 1986 reveals that few Conservatives understood its longer term significance. A large number of Conservative MPs then have no expert understanding of the complexities of the EC, but picked up rhetorical themes when the EC took centre stage in party anxieties. Many MPs take a pragmatic, sceptical or realist approach to policy-making.

The debates within the Cabinet and Party on economic and monetary union from the time of the Bruges Speech onwards undoubtedly concentrated Conservative minds on the dangers of the loss of British sovereignty and the re-imposition of socialism and bureaucracy. The debate within the party produced a limited amount of factionalism, with the formation of the Euro-sceptic Bruges Group, but the dominant view among backbenchers was that of the pragmatist. The increasingly strident and isolationist position of Mrs Thatcher and the pro-European sympathies of some traditional Conservative support (the City, the CBI, the Daily Mail and The Economist among others) played on the minds of the party faithful. The choice of John Major as Thatcher's successor perhaps revealed the general sympathy for a more pragmatic and less confrontational approach. But even this pragmatism is underpinned by a "realist" recognition of the desirability of Britain

playing a key role in EC negotiations, while refusing to transfer too much power from Westminster to Brussels or Strasbourg. Major's pragmatism on Europe (both sides of the party saw him as "one of us" on Europe) thus won the day over Heseltine's more visible support for a pro-European policy. The intra-party debate in the build-up to the Maastricht summit seemed primarily concerned with reaching a compromise behind which the majority of the party could unite, once again reducing the extreme Euro-sceptics to a vocal but ineffective rump. The agreement Major brought back from Maastricht only achieved this goal in the short-term, for after the general election, backbench opposition to the Treaty intensified.

The Bruges Group (and its Westminster off-shoot "The Parliamentary Friends of Bruges"), supports the vision of Europe presented in Thatcher's Bruges Speech and is a major vehicle of opposition to further European integration. It includes academics, businessmen and politicians from both the Conservative and Labour parties, but its primary significance has been in providing a rallying cry for Tory Euro-sceptics. Michael White's surveys of Conservative attitudes on Europe for "The Guardian" in 1990 showed that the Bruges Group claimed the support of 132 Conservative MPs, while Teddy Taylor's Conservative European Reform Group claimed 73 supporters <sup>2</sup>. A hard-core of anti-*communautaire* Conservatives have voted against pro-European government legislation in the Commons. Among these more consistent Euro-sceptics are the backbenchers Jonathan Aitken, John Biffen, Nicholas Budgen, Terry Dicks, Teddy Taylor and Nicholas Winterton. The "No Turning Back Group" of Conservative MPs has also collectively expressed its opposition to economic and monetary union. The most prominent Euro-sceptic



contributors to the EC debate have been Margaret Thatcher, Nicholas Ridley and Norman Tebbit.

Euro-enthusiasts are less overtly organized, though the European Movement chaired by Hugh Dykes has rallied pro-European Conservatives. In July 1990 White estimated there were up to 40 Euro-sympathisers in the parliamentary party including Sir Anthony Meyer, David Knox and Robert Hicks. Groups such as the Tory Reform Group and the Conservative MEPs, who have no formal role in the decision-making apparatus of the party, are sympathetic. The major Euro-enthusiast contributors to the European debate have been Edward Heath, Michael Heseltine and Sir Geoffrey Howe. Two former Conservatives Lord Cockfield and Sir Leon Brittan have taken up pro-European themes as UK Commissioners. Cockfield was the instigator of much of the 1992 programme, but his vision of the future development of the Community went further than that of Mrs Thatcher, for which he paid the political price when he was not re-appointed. His successor Sir Leon Brittan has also reacted more favourably to EC proposals for EMU than the Euro-sceptics would have hoped.

#### The Euro-Sceptics: Mrs Thatcher.

Mrs Thatcher has been the standard-bearer for the Conservative Euro-sceptics with her vehement opposition to any centralization or integration which would diminish British sovereignty. But the most ardent Euro-sceptics are also critical of her for signing the SEA, which set the wheels of European integration firmly in motion, and for finally agreeing to British membership of the ERM. The key themes in Thatcher's position on Britain's

relations with the EC and the future development of the Community can be found in her 1988 Bruges Speech and her parliamentary speeches, particularly those made after leaving office. The Bruges speech contained the crux of the Conservative opposition to European integration: fears of a loss of sovereignty or national diversity; opposition to proposed increases in the decision-making powers of EC institutions; fears of protectionism and commitment to a free-trade EC; commitment to NATO and the "special relationship" with the United States; and an opposition to socialism and the collectivist political traditions of other EC members.

Thatcher's account of sovereignty has been outlined in the previous chapter, but it is worth repeating that hers is an absolutist account, viewing anything beyond the single market project as an unacceptable erosion of national sovereignty. European integration threatens not only the sovereign decision-making authority of the nation-state, but the very essence of its national identity. European Union aims to transcend time-honoured national identities, replacing them with an artificial supra-national identity. Thatcher rejects the federal and functionalist visions of European union. Her vision is of co-operation between sovereign nation-states. Thatcher is eager to stress the differences in political tradition and outlook between Britain and continental Europe. The collectivist traditions of continental Europe are alien to British values of liberty, free trade and parliamentary democracy. In the debate on the British negotiating position for the Maastricht summit, Thatcher told the House that one of the primary concerns of the government should be the protection of national identity.



"It has been rightly said that it is the character of a people which determines the institutions which govern them, and not the institutions which give people their character. Yes, it is about being British and what we feel for our country, our Parliament, our traditions and our liberties. Because of our history that feeling is perhaps stronger here than anywhere else in Europe, and it must determine the way in which our government approaches such fundamental matters." (Hansard, vol. 199, no. 13, col. 292).

Thatcher's vision is of a Europe in which independent states work together but maintain their distinct national identities. It is not to be a federal or politically united Europe, but one of co-operative yet ultimately independent nation-states, upholding their nationhood and acting to protect their national interests where necessary. The Delors inspired vision of a political union is criticized as bureaucratic and inefficient, reimposing a centralist socialism on a British people who had rejected it in national elections. Thus for Thatcher,

"We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels." (Thatcher, 1988, p. 4).

Thatcher wants to see practical reform of the Community's institutional structure, notably the CAP and the Community budget, and opposes extensions of Community competence or the transfer of decision-making authority from national to EC level. Federalist schemes for EMU and political union would seriously undermine the sovereignty of Parliament and the British people it represents. The extension of majority-voting would mean that decisions could be imposed on Britain despite the expressed opposition of the government and Westminster. Although she claims that the SEA merely repeated existing commitments to economic and monetary co-operation, by signing the SEA Thatcher contributed to the build-up of pressure for

further integration and agreed to a decisive step away from unanimity. It was the SEA, signed by Thatcher and pushed through Parliament on guillotined motions, which gave fresh momentum to proposals for European integration and moved EC decision-making towards qualified majority voting. Subsequently Thatcher dubbed this path "a federal Europe achieved by stealth", involving "the greatest abdication of national and parliamentary sovereignty in our history" (Hansard, vol. 193, no. 130, col. 1032).

In her Bruges speech, Thatcher outlined her vision of a Europe of free trade and competition, with the 1992 internal market the realization of the Treaty of Rome's character as a "charter for economic liberty". She opposed a protectionist Europe and the stream of EC directives which sought to create a level playing field yet only brought centralization and inefficiency. While other EC member states were pushing for deeper integration, Thatcher was castigating them for laxity in introducing the legislation required for the realization of the internal market. By the 1988 Hanover Summit she was rounding on proposals for economic and monetary union, claiming that a single currency and central bank could only exist in a united Europe with a common monetary policy. Economic and monetary union would prevent nations from having their own economic policies and was therefore a threat to British sovereignty, economic success and democratic accountability.

For many years, Thatcher opposed British membership of the ERM, her preference being for floating exchange rates and government control over interest rates. Divisions within the Cabinet saw Lawson shadowing the DM, before Thatcher intervened to prevent her Chancellor "bucking the market". At the 1989 Madrid summit Howe and Lawson manoeuvred her into setting



conditions for British entry, and in October 1990 Thatcher and Major finally took the decision to join the ERM. Thatcher claimed to have agreed to this on advice that Britain would gain from greater co-operation while not being unduly restricted economically. However, significant doubts remain about the extent to which Thatcher actively supported ERM entry with her vocal support for the ERM notably absent since her resignation.

Thatcher has been far more vigorous in her opposition to plans for EMU and its associated single currency and European Central Bank. In the face of these proposals, Thatcher has depicted the Pound Sterling as one of the most visible and essential symbols of national sovereignty. She backed the "hard ecu" plan of her Chancellor John Major as a means of slowing down the momentum towards EMU, preventing the imposition of a single currency and removing the need for a Central Bank. The "hard ecu" would evolve as a common currency, not an imposed single currency, and could be used by governments to the extent they desired. While trying to present the "hard ecu" plan as a serious British contribution to the EMU debate though, Thatcher managed to undermine it by expressing a personal belief that it "would not be widely used" as states would prefer to use their own national currencies. From the backbenches and in speeches abroad, Thatcher repeated her opposition to EMU when out of office. In the Commons in June 1991 Thatcher offered five points of advice for British negotiators: (i) opposition to EMU as it involves an abdication of British sovereignty; (ii) the need for greater co-operation between nation-states rather than further integration; (iii) the belief that federalism means centralization; (iv) the danger of "vague commitments" becoming "damaging proposals" eg on social

policy; and (iv) the need to maintain a strong relationship with the US and encourage reform in Eastern Europe.

These last two points illustrated Thatcher's disdain for the negotiating processes of the EC and the Atlanticist emphasis in her foreign policy. The problems she faced in reducing Britain's budgetary contributions and her experiences of other EC states uniting to set agendas or push through motions against Britain's wishes, have convinced her that British interests can only be safeguarded by determined opposition not by concessions. She thus advised John Major to go to Maastricht not with her "handbag", but with his "cricket bat" to beat off demands for federalism.

"The history of our dealings with the European Community seem to consist of our conceding powers, of reassurances being given about their limits, of those limits being breached, and of the European Community then coming back with a new set of demands for more power for the Commission. That is the conveyor belt to federalism." (Hansard, vol. 199, no. 13, col. 294).

Finally, Thatcher has emphasized the commitment of the UK to NATO and to the United States, supporting the strengthening of the Western European Union, but not at the expense of NATO. Thatcher's personal commitment to the special relationship with the US was especially strong, seeing Britain as the major European ally of the United States, a position strengthened during the war with Iraq at a time when Germany seemed to be emerging as the new continental power. In her speeches in Chicago and New York in June 1991 Thatcher looked to an Atlantic Economic Community, founded on Anglo-Saxon principles of free trade and liberal democracy.<sup>3</sup> This would involve states from North America, Western Europe and the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe in an community of liberal free trade, and was clearly



offered as an alternative to the vision of a closed,federal Europe which she regards as the likely outcome of moves towards EMU.

Thatcher is not an isolationist:she believes that Britain must be a member of the Community,but one based on intergovernmental co-operation and primarily concerned with the creation of the single market.For her,EMU is an unacceptable erosion of national sovereignty.A single currency and the single monetary policy it implies are undesirable and unworkable steps on the road to a federal Europe.As John Major,sought a deal at Maastricht, Thatcher called for a referendum on the single currency to allow people to have a choice on the irrevocable removal of the pound sterling as the national unit of currency.Thatcher reasoned that if,as seemed likely,all the major political parties supported moves towards EMU,the British people would be denied a real choice on the issue at a general election.However, her call for a referendum sits uneasily with her belief in the primacy of parliamentary sovereignty which she has often invoked against plans for European integration.Thatcher abstained from voting on the agreement Major obtained at Maastricht.It seems unlikely that as Prime Minister she would have agreed to any clause implying British acceptance of the single currency as an EC objective.She has also consistently opposed the extension of Community competence,increased powers for the EP and the extension of qualified majority voting,particularly on foreign policy matters.

In the previous chapter,I noted that the Thatcher governments did not follow a coherent nationalist strategy.The EC's negotiating process and the relatively high level of support for European Union among other member states meant that Thatcherism could only stall not prevent integration.

Government policy was necessarily a strategic blend of compromise measures plus ideological beliefs and perceptions of the national interest which would not be sacrificed. Tensions between the neo-liberal and "Gaullist" elements in Thatcherism revealed themselves in negotiations on the internal market to illustrate the claims made in Chapter Five that Thatcherism, whether defined as doctrine or government policy (statecraft) is not and could not be coherently nationalist. In this section I have assessed the values and beliefs of Margaret Thatcher herself, the other method of analysing Thatcherism which I outlined in Chapter Five. Although she frequently uses nationalist rhetoric, Thatcher's personal thought is not coherently nationalist in the sense that Powell's was. Her understanding of sovereignty is not as clear as Powell's: she talks of the sovereignty of parliament, but advocates a referendum to by-pass Westminster, while her premiership continued the shift of power away from the legislature to the executive. When Thatcher did adopt a hardline position on sovereignty in the face of EMU, it proved damaging to Britain's influence in the EC.

Much of the significance of Thatcher's use of the language of nationhood and sovereignty on EC issues lies in its effects on the domestic political agenda and on the debate in the Conservative Party. Her Bruges speech was a shot across the bows of her EC partners and slowed down the pace of European integration. Domestically it fuelled the European debate and mobilized Conservative Euro-sceptics. The two major protagonists of the EC debate of twenty years earlier, Heath and Powell agreed that the Bruges Speech was a turning point in British foreign policy. Heath saw it as a dangerous move towards isolation and impotence, Powell as a decisive move against the Foreign Office and one which recognized that British interests



were incompatible with EC membership. The speech and Thatcher's vehement opposition to EMU and political union in her final weeks in office contributed to the polarization of the Conservative Party. But it should also be noted that the Bruges Speech was not such a sharp break from the position of previous British governments as has often been implied (George, 1990). Few British politicians would have unreservedly supported the Delors plans for EMU or happily presided over a decline in the capacity for government decision-making.

#### Other Euro-Sceptics.

Mrs Thatcher's opposition to EMU and political union has acted as a guiding light for many Euro-sceptics within the Conservative Party. Her Bruges speech rallied support for her vision of Europe under the banner of the Bruges Group, of which she later became President. Many of the themes espoused in Thatcher's attitude towards the EC are echoed in the discourse of prominent Euro-sceptics such as Nicholas Ridley and Norman Tebbit. But there are also significant differences of opinion and strategy within the Euro-sceptic camp as a whole, and I shall now outline some of these.

The most prominent of Mrs Thatcher's allies on Europe, both in the Cabinet and then on the backbenches, has been Nicholas Ridley. He was forced to resign from her Cabinet in July 1990 having made derogatory comments about the role of the Germans and French in the EC in an interview for "The Spectator".<sup>5</sup> Ridley shares Mrs Thatcher's belief that the cards are often unfairly stacked against Britain in the EC. He portrays the EC as dominated

by a "Franco-German axis" concerned only to promote their own national interests,often at the expense of Britain (Ridley,1991,p.209).It was this which Ridley referred to as "a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe",backed by French "poodles" in his "Spectator" interview.His fear was that the strength of the German economy and the Deutschmark would mean that other EC states would be economically subservient to the Germans. Ridley follows Thatcher in arguing that concessions and compromise are the wrong way to secure British objectives in the Community,claiming that ERM membership and the "hard ecu" plan were only agreed to on misplaced Foreign Office advice about the concessions other EC members would make in return.

The thrust of Ridley's Euro-scepticism is economic,a belief that ERM membership is economically undesirable and that EMU is unworkable.<sup>6</sup> His preference is again for a Europe of free trade between co-operating nation-states.He is highly critical of Delors' desire for a centralized,socialist Europe,and rounds on Lawson and Howe for trying to force Thatcher into joining the ERM without Cabinet support for such a move. EMU is both unworkable and undesirable.It would severely erode national sovereignty in critical economic areas,leaving national governments without the economic weapons of control of interest rates and exchange rates.All the major economic decisions would be made in the EC,with uncompetitive states relying on structural fund hand-outs from the Commission (Ridley,1991, pp. 147-152).The Third Stage of EMU is depicted as part of Delors' scheme for a federal Europe,but is economically unworkable because of its requirement for permanent economic convergence between all EC member states.Differences between states in terms of productivity,inflation rates



and currency values cannot be permanently ironed out: any unusual event such as the Gulf War will throw economies temporarily off course (Ridley, 1991).

British membership of the ERM is also criticized, the ERM being likened to a "halfway house", implying political union but having significant economic drawbacks. Ridley claims that historically the British economy has been most successful when the value of the Pound Sterling has been allowed to fluctuate, the exchange rate floating in the market place. He blames ERM membership, at an artificially high rate as well, for the recession and high interest rates of the early 1990s. Ridley was the subject of internal party criticism when he echoed Powell by arguing that people should vote for the anti-federal candidate in their constituency, regardless of which party he represents. <sup>7</sup>

Norman Tebbit's opposition to European integration is delivered in more authentically nationalist tones than Ridley's primarily economic criticism. Tebbit uses the language of nationhood as a rhetorical weapon, pointing to an inherent conflict between British and continental accounts of nationhood. The EC is trying to change the traditional nature of the constitution and our national identity, but it is a "foreign force", alien to the British way of life. Tebbit points to the revival of ethnic politics in Eastern Europe as to show that nationhood is crucial and supra-national states doomed to failure. He argues that the EC would fail as a federal union because of the diverse ethnic and linguistic groups in Europe.

"The importance of language is not just that it reflects past and guides future cultural patterns. A democratic state must have a sense of national identity and of national public opinion to sustain it. Without a

common language it is almost impossible for either to exist." (Tebbit,1991,p.66).

The prospect of EMU and political union raises the issue of national sovereignty, or the right to national self-government as Tebbit prefers to call it (Tebbit,1992). The trend in the EC has been towards the erosion of self-government notably with the extension of qualified majority voting and the impending threat of a single currency and monetary policy.<sup>6</sup> The creation of a single currency would be the final act in this erosion of sovereignty: from that moment the British Chancellor of the Exchequer would lose his effectiveness, his position being comparable to that of "the treasurer of a permanently rate-capped local authority" (Tebbit,1991,p.69). Parliament had no mandate to permanently give-up the right to self-government, so a move towards a single currency could only be decided by a referendum. But it is not made clear why this referendum should permanently bind future generations. In the build-up to the Maastricht summit, Tebbit argued that Britain should use its veto to prevent any of the EC member states from moving towards EMU or political union. He subsequently voted against the government on the agreement Major brought back calling it "a series of bridgeheads into our constitution", and claiming that the opt-out clause "clearly implies that Her Majesty's Government have no objections in principle to the creation of a single currency" (Hansard, vol.201, no.33, col.323). Tebbit's vision is again that of a Europe of co-operating nation-states.

Nigel Lawson's position in the Euro-sceptic camp is less clear cut than that of either Thatcher or Ridley, after all it was he who strongly backed British membership of the ERM. However, Lawson opposes the Stage Three



proposals for a single currency and an independent European Central Bank, believing that these are incompatible with his key values: democratic accountability, national sovereignty over economic affairs, and "essential" national identity (Hansard, vol. 199, no. 13, col. 469). He fears that EMU will provoke a backlash of extreme right-wing nationalism in some European states as they lose control over economic policy. <sup>9</sup> Lawson wants a free-trade Europe of co-operating nation-states, encouraging competition without imposing tax harmonization or excessive regulation. He supports the EMS as a means of tightening EC currency movements and welcomed the "hard ecu" plan as a means of having a common rather than single currency, but opposes EMU.

"The European Monetary System is an agreement between individual sovereign states whose economic policies remain different and distinct.. Economic and monetary union by contrast is incompatible with independent sovereign states with control over their own fiscal and monetary policies." (Lawson, 1989, p. 15).

Teddy Taylor has been a consistent opponent of official Conservative Party policy on the EC, especially as Chairman of the Conservative European Reform Group. Writing for the Monday Club in 1982, he argued that Britain should seek "special status" as an associate member of a two-tier Europe. The task of Conservatives is to protect the nationhood under threat from the Community.

"If the Conservatives were to commit themselves to the desire to associate with Europe, but not to be enmeshed within it, we believe we would not only adopt an arrangement which conforms to the basic view of Britons, but would adopt a posture more in keeping with Conservative principles and offer the nation the opportunity to free ourselves from a binding and inevitably increasing link which will destroy the whole basis of nationhood and destine our islands to inevitable economic decline." (Storey & Taylor, 1982, p. 16).

Taylor voted against the SEA in June 1986, predicting that it would lead to the loss of national sovereignty in the crucial realm of monetary policy and give greater power to EC institutions at the expense of Westminster. In 1990 he voted against the government on British membership of the ERM, voicing his fears on EMU and the artificial pegging of exchange rates. In 1991 Taylor returned to the idea of a two-tier Europe with Britain in the second tier (possibly with the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe), benefitting from the internal market without having to proceed any further towards a federal Europe. <sup>10</sup>

The No Turning Back Group (NTBG) of neo-liberal Conservative MPs dubbed EMU "the nightmare scenario" in their pamphlet "Europe: Onwards From Bruges" in 1990. EMU would bring enforced harmonization, regulation and bureaucratic imposition regardless of national traditions and differences. Their alternative vision, "the dream scenario", is of Europe as a single market with a level playing field.

"In this possible future, the frontiers come down in 1992, but no attempt is made to take away national sovereignty or to impose alien systems and standards of regulation. Instead the nations of Europe have to take account of each other in determining their actions. With enterprise and talent free to settle wherever they will within the single market, nations must contrive to encourage them within their borders and to discourage them from leaving." (NTBG, 1990, pp. 5-6).

The Euro-sceptics do not constitute an organized faction within the Conservative Party for important ideological and strategic differences exist within the camp.<sup>11</sup> Opposition to European Union may be expressed through economic concerns (but by no means all Euro-sceptics oppose the ERM), fears of a loss of political sovereignty, distrust of EC bureaucracy and "backdoor



socialism" or a belief that the EC is structurally biased against British interests. Despite this lack of factional unity or organization, the Euro-sceptics have caused anxious moments for the Government Whips, as some Tory MPs voted against the SEA, ERM entry and Major's stance at the Maastricht Summit, but without seriously threatening the government's majority.<sup>12</sup> In the 1992 election campaign the Euro-sceptics were temporarily silenced to give the impression of party unity, but with the Danish referendum's rejection of the Maastricht Treaty, their stance was re-invigorated. Only 22 Tories voted against the Second Reading of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill, but after the Danish "No" 100 Conservative MPs signed a motion calling on the government to seek a fresh start in the EC.<sup>13</sup> Calls for a British referendum also gained support.

#### Conservative Euro-Enthusiasts.

The main spokespersons for the Euro-enthusiasts in the parliamentary Conservative Party are former Prime Minister Edward Heath and Michael Heseltine. As mentioned above the European Movement has some support but is not an organized faction, with Heath and Heseltine promoting their views as individuals. Heath has long played a significant role in Britain's relations with Europe, acting as a negotiator for British entry to the EC in the 1960s, before overseeing this goal during his premiership. Heath was then, and is now, an enthusiast for greater European union. At the Paris Summit in 1972 Heath and other EC heads of government agreed on a programme of European Union which, if implemented, would have brought about an internal market, a central bank and a common currency by 1980 (George, 1990, pp. 56-60). However, world recession and the stagnation of the EC in the 1970s prevented these

aims being realized. Now Heath believes moves towards European Union must be more pragmatic and built on consensus, but is essential nonetheless (Heath, 1988).

"The notion of independent national sovereignty is a chimera, and that only by binding our institutions closer together can we achieve that shared sovereignty which, in fact, gives us greater influence over the forces which control our destiny. There is nothing to fear from closer union." (Heath, 1989)

For Heath the EC must develop as a "form of unified government suited to its own needs". This is to include moves towards closer political and economic integration, a significant departure from the Thatcherite insistence on seeing the EC as merely an economic community. In 1988, Heath called for full British participation in the European Monetary System so that Britain would play its part in determining future developments. In the longer term he regards a central bank and single currency as essential to closer union, while a common foreign and defence policy are also key parts of his vision.

Heath's views on European union go further than most of those on the pro-European side of the debate. It is Heath rather than Thatcher who provides the most significant departure from the norm in British relations with the EC. Whereas other British Prime Ministers have been mildly enthusiastic about the EC without being fully *communautaire* or sharing the continental European ideal, Heath is clearly at ease with European federalists. Many in the Conservative Party pragmatically recognize that the tide is flowing towards greater European integration, but are keen to ensure that it is tempered to meet British interests. Few are as enthusiastic about a common economic policy or single currency as Heath, for whom European



union is an ideological goal. His dismissal of the Thatcherite emphasis on the importance of sovereignty is though one shared by the Euro-enthusiasts who believe that the continuing relevance of national sovereignty is overstated. The views of Sir Geoffrey Howe on the efficacy of national sovereignty have been discussed in Chapter Six. In debates on EC matters in the Commons, pro-European backbenchers including Edwina Currie and Alan Haselhurst, have been critical of Thatcherite rhetoric on sovereignty. Sir Peter Horden believes the attachment to national sovereignty has been costly in economic terms.

"There is nothing to be said for sovereignty if it means economic isolation and a gentle slide against all other currencies.. (Sovereignty has meant) the inalienable right to depreciate our currency and to pay ourselves more than we earn." (Hansard, vol. 1534, col. 224).

Having resigned from the Cabinet during the Westland affair in 1986 when he had proposed a European takeover of the helicopter company, Michael Heseltine became the most important and visible Euro-enthusiast in the party. Heseltine regards economic co-operation in the EC as essential for British interests and as a key part of his Conservative project. His is a technocratic conservatism, looking to an active partnership between government and industry to ensure British success in the European market. But his enthusiasm for full, rapid economic and monetary union is muted, and he frequently stresses the need for institutional reform to increase democratic accountability. Heseltine's vision of Europe is most clearly laid out in his 1989 book "The Challenge of Europe: Can Britain Win?". As with other pro-Europeans, Heseltine argues that the notion of effective national sovereignty is flawed, and claims that the trend is towards a "creeping federalism". The Single European Act was "as comprehensive a redefinition of

national sovereignty as we have ever known" (Heseltine,1989,p.23), but one essential for British interests.

"No one would wish to deny our nationhood but it is the case that,from the moment Britain threw in her lot with that of her European partners, no logical alternative has existed to the transfer of some power to the European institutions." (Heseltine,1989,p.27).

Heseltine proposes a series of institutional reforms to make this "fledgling federalism" more palatable. These reforms would include a more accountable European Parliament, with national parliaments having direct influence in a newly-created upper house or senate within the EP. National parliaments, rather than just national governments, would play the leading role in ensuring effective accountability and national influence. Reform of the budget, regional and agricultural policies are also a priority for Heseltine. He also backed British entry into the ERM. Heseltine's policies are a pragmatic and technocratic mix, emphasizing competition and free-trade, while recognizing the desirability of increased public spending to ensure development in high-technology areas.

"The case for Europe must rest on the argument that we will achieve more for our people within a more competitive European market than they can hope for within a collection of purely national markets." (Heseltine, 1989, p.77).

Heseltine is enthusiastic about the 1992 project and the Cockfield and Cecchini reports, viewing the internal market as the key to national and European prosperity. He supports closer association of monetary policies and supports an evolutionary and voluntary move towards a single currency, but fears the unaccountability of a European Central Bank. In the Jean Monnet Lecture in July 1990, Heseltine accepted that economic and monetary union



was inevitable and called for the Bank of England to become independent as part of the gradual transition to an accountable European Central Bank. At the 1990 Party Conference he supported a gradual economic convergence and warned that Thatcher's eagerness to open up the EC to Eastern Europe would produce a flood of refugees with grave effects.<sup>14</sup>

"European institutions should grow and their growth should not be forced; sovereignty, even in penny packets, should be transferred to a higher authority only where there is an overwhelming case for it; initial commitments should be voluntary, and to ensure confidence, should be retractable also." (Heseltine, 1989, p.90).

Heseltine locates his support for a closer union of European states in a Conservative tradition dating back to Churchill's vision of an extended sovereignty of real influence and economic progress. He also backs the Burkean concept of a chain of loyalties and attachments ranging from family to nation state and common humanity. New associations such as a closer European Union need not then destroy old attachments. National diversity and patriotism can survive in an integrated Europe, but the idea of indivisible national sovereignty is no longer relevant. National independence is not a viable option for the UK; the only way forward is through an active role in the EC, influencing developments rather than being excluded and isolated. Heseltine signalled his challenge for the Conservative Party leadership in a letter to his constituency chairman in November 1990 in which he warned of the damage being done to Britain's role in the Community by Thatcher's uncompromising stance on European integration.<sup>15</sup> Though the European issue did not feature prominently in the leadership election, most Euro-sceptics would have been wary of the direction of government policy under a Heseltine premiership.

Former Conservative minister, Lord Cockfield has been a consistent supporter of greater European integration. He is a neo-liberal in economic terms, but believes that the 1992 programme should go beyond the internal market and move towards economic and monetary union (Cockfield, 1990). The Single European Act is depicted as the first formal legal step towards political union and as introducing social and monetary dimensions to the process of European integration. Cockfield's views were anathema to Thatcher who replaced him as Commissioner with Sir Leon Brittan when she refused to renominate Cockfield. Brittan though has proved himself to be no Euro-sceptic, seeking compromise between the UK and Europe to ease the British road to economic and monetary union.<sup>16</sup> Brittan has sought to gain government acceptance of a single currency as the ultimate goal so that the UK would not become isolated, but could progress towards EMU at its own pace. Generally, most Conservative MEPs are more enthusiastic about European Union than their counterparts at Westminster, but have little practical influence over policy-making in the party.

As discussed in the first part of this Chapter, Sir Geoffrey Howe is also a supporter of a more active British role in the EC. His article on the concept of sovereignty shows that he too regards sovereignty as a myth in the modern world. For Howe, Britain should be concerned with directing change in Europe rather than seeking to maintain British economic independence at the expense of economic decline (Howe, 1984 & 1990). Howe had supported early entry into the ERM while Foreign Secretary, manoeuvring Thatcher into agreeing the Madrid Conditions in 1989. As the divisions in the Cabinet and party became more visible, Howe was increasingly critical of Thatcher's vehement opposition to moves towards economic and monetary union. After the



Rome Summit of October 1990, Thatcher's tone became more strident, prompting Howe's resignation from the Cabinet and a strong attack on Thatcher's policy towards the EC and the style of her premiership in his Commons' resignation speech.<sup>17</sup> Howe had called for Britain to be "in the drivers' cab" of the European train, but Thatcher's response was that those who supported EMU deserved to be "taken for a ride".

From the backbenches, Howe continued to press for a more positive British approach to developments in the Community, expanding the country's influence by pooling sovereignty. He offered support for the Major government's negotiations on an opt-out clause in the EMU treaty, but went beyond the government position by emphasizing the positive advantages of a single currency. Britain would be exposed if it remained outside a single currency because of high transaction costs, volatile exchange rates and reduced inward investment (Hansard, vol. 199, no. 13, col. 310). Howe also backed the "combined strength" produced by moves towards joint decision by EC member states on foreign policy.

#### Summary and Conclusions.

British policy towards the EC has long been a source of tension within the Conservative Party: Heath's government only secured Commons' support for British entry with the support of Liberal and some Labour MPs after rebellions by anti-Common Market Tory MPs (Norton, 1978). The re-emergence of intra-party tensions in the late 1980s did not reach these levels partly because of the size of the government majority and a lack of organized factionalism, but were still worrying for the Government Whips and party

managers. In a normally loyal and non-ideological parliamentary party, the European issue mobilized a large number of MPs who proceeded to back one or other of the rival camps. Much of the potency of the issue can be put down to Thatcher's own politicization of policy on the EC after her Bruges speech. The splits which developed within the Cabinet were mirrored in the parliamentary party, gathering momentum as positive integration in the EC came to dominate the political agenda. A significant impact of the split was its role in the resignation of Mrs Thatcher. Thatcher had become increasingly strident and isolated in her attitude towards EMU, prompting the resignation of Howe and Heseltine's challenge. Though the issue rarely surfaced in the leadership campaign proper, it was the European issue which more than any other provoked the circumstances which culminated in Thatcher's downfall.

The agreement secured by John Major at Maastricht did not immediately produce the large split in the Tory ranks predicted by some commentators, though the situation changed after the Danish referendum. The road to the summit had been paved with internal dissension and some successes for the government in easing the worries of Euro-sceptics and winning their parliamentary support. Ultimately only a handful of Euro-sceptics voted against the government on its negotiating position and the agreement it signed at Maastricht. Of the most prominent Euro-sceptics, several left the Commons in the 1992 elections (eg Thatcher, Ridley and Tebbit) while others like John Biffen were long-term opponents rather than recent recruits to the cause.<sup>18</sup> The emergence of the Bruges Group and the problems ahead for Britain as European integration gathers pace will probably ensure that divisions on Europe remain a thorn in the side of the government, despite



Major's more pragmatic and consensual approach. The Right of the party still has the potential to launch a nationalist campaign against European Union. The issue of national self-government is likely to be its trump card in the years ahead, but without the presence of Thatcher and others in the parliamentary party it will lack a figurehead. Thatcher and Tebbit came closest to offering a nationalist strategy from 1987, but lacked a coherent platform and suffered from so obviously running against the tide of developments. Thatcher did not have the intellectual stature of Powell: her accounts of sovereignty were inconsistent and any nationalist platform suffered from tensions between her Gaullist approach to the EC and her neo-liberal economics.

#### Footnotes:

1. In 1971/2 39 Tories voted against the principle of entry to the EEC. On the Second Reading of the European Communities Bill, 15 Tories voted against the Government while 5 abstained, while on the Third Reading the figures were 16 against and 4 abstentions. Only cross-voting by Labour and Liberal MPs ensured the Bill's passage. See Philip Norton: *"Conservative Dissidents: Dissent within the Parliamentary Conservative Party, 1970-74"*, Temple Smith, London, 1978.
2. *The Guardian*, 17th July 1990 & 31st October 1990.
3. See the reports in *The Guardian*, 19th & 20th June 1991. Thatcher's Chicago Speech was reportedly rewritten to remove the more controversial points, but still provoked a vicious attack from Heath.
4. See Edward Heath: "Forty Years of Political Labour Must Not Be Swept Brusquely Away", in *The Independent*, 22nd September 1989 and Enoch Powell: "Opportunities and Dangers?", in Patrick Robertson (ed): *"Reshaping Europe in the Twenty-First Century"*, Macmillan, London, 1992.
5. "Saying the Unsayable about the Germans", in *The Spectator*, 14th July 1990.
6. See also Nicholas Ridley: "The Home Truth of Euro-Money", in *The Guardian*, 28th February 1991.
7. *The Independent on Sunday*, 10th November 1991.

8. See also Norman Tebbit: "Hijack on the Euro-Express", in *The Guardian*, 12th November 1991.
9. Lawson argued that a single currency would create nationalist backlashes in Europe, but stressed his support for the ERM in *The London Evening Standard*, 4th November 1991.
10. *The Guardian*, 14th May 1991.
11. Other examples of Conservative Euro-scepticism can be found in Michael Spicer: "Beware of a Federal Fiasco", in *The Guardian*, 20th June 1991 and Richard Shepherd: "What a Tangled Web we Weave", in *The Guardian*, 16th June 1992. See also the collection of Bruges Group essays in Patrick Robertson (ed): *Reshaping Europe in the Twenty-First Century*, Macmillan, London, 1992.
12. Euro-sceptic Tony Favell resigned his position as John Major's Parliamentary Private Secretary following Britain's entry into the ERM.
13. 7 Tories voted against the Government and 12 abstained in a vote on the Maastricht Summit in December 1991. Those who voted against were: John Biffen, John Browne, Nicholas Budgen, Tony Favell, Richard Shepherd, Norman Tebbit & Bill Walker. Abstainers were: Margaret Thatcher, Gerald Howarth, Bill Cash, James Cran, Christopher Gill, John Carlisle, Toby Jessel, Tim Janman & Teresa Gorman. In the post-election Parliament, 22 Tory Mps voted against the Second Reading of the European Communities (Amendment) Bill. They were: Rupert Allason, John Biffen, Sir Richard Body, Nicholas Budgen, John Butcher, John Carlisle, Michael Cartiss, Bill Cash, James Cran, Christopher Gill, Teresa Gorman, Harry Greenway, Andrew Hunter, Toby Jessel, Tony Marlow, David Porter, Richard Shepherd, Sir Trevor Skeet, Michael Spicer, Sir Teddy Taylor, Ann Winterton & Nicholas Winterton. For the list of 100 Conservative MPs who signed the anti-Maastricht motion see *The Guardian*, 5th June 1991.
14. *The Guardian*, 10th October 1990.
15. The letter is reprinted in *The Guardian*, 5th November 1990.
16. See Leon Brittan: "EMU: Not a Problem, a Solution" in *The Independent*, 14th March 1991 and report in *The Guardian*, 28th November 1991. Also of interest is Peter Price MEP: "No Nation is an Island in Tomorrow's World", in *The Independent*, 17th January 1990.
17. Howe's resignation letter is reprinted in *The Guardian*, 2nd November 1990.
18. But 25 Conservative candidates signed a letter warning against economic and political union in *The Daily Telegraph*, 29th November 1991.



## CHAPTER EIGHT: THATCHERISM AND THE MANAGEMENT OF A PLURAL SOCIETY.

Both the Conservative Party and conservative thought in general have found difficulty in adapting to the development of a multi-cultural society in Britain. Although it is not explicitly racist, the conservative nation defines itself in terms of tradition and organicism which preclude the easy integration of ethnic minority groups, with their own cultural and political identities, into British society. Conservative values of tradition, authority and patriotic allegiance to state and nation implicitly work against a society of diverse ethnic identities. Minority cultures are seen as "alien" groups outside of the traditional values of British society and the British way of life. The emergence of Powellism and New Right cultural conservatism ended the inertia into which the conservative nation had fallen, proposing a protection of national identity against the perceived threat of large-scale immigration. It was though a fundamentally flawed account of nationhood and one ill-equipped to address the problems of a plural society.

The changing context of conservative thinking on the nation was echoed in the dilemmas the plural society posed for the Conservative Party. The Conservative leadership rejected Powell's nationalist strategy in which immigration control and repatriation would be the key concerns of a government seeking to revive national identity. Under Thatcher's leadership, the party still faced difficult choices on the direction of its policies on race and immigration. On the one hand it was committed to "firm but fair" immigration controls and a new British Nationality Act, recognizing the electoral attractions of a populist stance in this area. On the other, having

rejected repatriation and assimilation, the party had to manage the plural society and ensure harmonious relations between the various communities (Layton-Henry,1978).It is on these dual areas of Thatcherite policy that this chapter focuses.

The Thatcher era was an important one for the politics of race, reflecting the breakdown of bi-partisan consensus on the desirability of keeping race issues off the political agenda.Under Thatcher's leadership,the Conservative Party took a populist line on race issues,using popular fears of mass immigration to their political advantage and forcing the Labour Party onto the defensive.This populism thus both exploited existing fears about levels of immigration and the integration of ethnic minorities into British society and shaped the political agenda through its populist rhetoric (Studlar,1980).In this respect,Thatcherism has built on the sea change which Powellism brought to the politics of race.

Prior to 1968, the dominant approach to race politics was the liberal formula for integration, with support from the major parties for curbs on immigration.Equally,the major political parties were keen to keep race issues off the political agenda,delegating responsibility for race relations and integration to local authorities and quangos (Bulpitt,1986,b).In 1966 Roy Jenkins talked of mutual tolerance,equality of opportunity and cultural diversity as the guiding principles for the plural society,allowing ethnic minority communities to retain their cultural identities (Saggar,1991). Powell broke the silence of the elite or centre on race relations by proposing repatriation and questioning the possibility and desirability of integration.This focus on a politics of nationhood to protect the British



way of life is also found in the writings of cultural conservatives who portray ethnic minorities as "a problem" for British society. Thatcherite rhetoric has rejected the liberal solution and politicised race issues, seeking to gain from a populist rhetoric and a firm stance on immigration. Thatcherism, as I have pointed out in earlier chapters, is not a coherent political doctrine, but has two distinct outlooks, the strong state emphasis on culture and nationhood plus the neo-liberal emphasis on market solutions and individualism. The language of the former has been important in establishing a populist approach which politicizes race issues and excludes some ethnic communities from full membership of the national community. The neo-liberal approach rejects this emphasis on culture and nationhood, but by focusing on individuals rather than groups, and on market solutions, has prevented state action aimed at addressing the problems facing the ethnic minorities in areas like housing, employment, education and racial discrimination (Mitchell & Russell, 1989).

#### Race Issues and the Conservative Party in the 1970s.

The expulsion of Powell from the Shadow Cabinet after his controversial and provocative "rivers of blood" speech showed that the mainstream of the party had no taste for repatriation or apocalyptic visions of the failure of integration. The Tory Right and Powellite followers continued to play the "numbers game" warning that the rapid expansion of the ethnic communities in the inner cities would create unsurmountable problems for future generations. The racist Right in the guise of the National Front had gained strength at local elections in the mid-1970s, and had achieved a significant level of infiltration into the Monday Club in 1971/2. However until 1978 the

Conservative Party leadership publicly stuck to the liberal, integrationist consensus with its objectives of limiting primary immigration and improving race relations through equality of opportunity and tolerance of multiculturalism. Heath's government passed the 1971 Immigration Act which introduced the category of "patriality" to determine which citizens had the right of abode in the UK, but accepted Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin in 1972. Despite criticism from the Tory Right and claims that a reduction in racial discrimination could not be achieved through legislation, the Conservative leadership did not officially oppose the 1976 Race Relations Act.

The Conservative Party leadership regarded strict immigration laws as the best means by which to improve domestic race relations and achieve social cohesion. Under Thatcher's leadership the concentration on immigration, always the dominant theme in the dual approach, became even more obvious as leading Tories adopted a populist approach, expecting to reap electoral rewards. In 1978 both Whitelaw and Thatcher emphasized the issue of immigration, pushing race issues into the electoral arena of party political debate. Whitelaw, the Shadow Home Secretary, outlined Conservative proposals for stricter immigration rules and a new Nationality Act in a series of speeches in 1977/8. The most widely reported comments on race issues were those made by Thatcher in a Granada Television "World In Action" programme on 30th January 1978. In this broadcast Thatcher spoke of the legitimate fears the indigenous population had about "swamping" by alien cultures of ethnic minorities and immigrants. This echoed Powellism's belief that the prejudices of the majority population were legitimate and should be taken into account when determining membership of the nation.



"People are really rather afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture, and you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law and done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to them coming in. So, if you want good race relations, you have got to allay people's fears about immigration." (quoted in Bevan, 1986, p.85).

Thatcher demonstrated her grasp of populist rhetoric, recognizing the concerns of ordinary people and backing their concerns about "alien" ways of life. It is immigrants who are seen as the root of the problem, rather than racism in society. This populist anti-immigration tone was also seen in the Conservative-supporting tabloid press in the Thatcher years, where blacks were often portrayed as criminals or unwelcome outsiders in British society. In her Granada TV interview, Thatcher readily admitted that the Conservative Party was aiming to win back votes lost to the National Front by adopting a tough stance on immigration. Immigration issues remained electorally significant in the run-up to the general election as opinion polls indicated popular support for the Conservative proposals (Layton-Henry, 1978). After winning the 1979 general election, the Thatcher government set out to tighten immigration laws, introduce a new Nationality Bill, and manage the status quo in race relations rather than introduce state-led initiatives.

#### The British Nationality Act, 1981.

One of the key rights a state has is determining who is entitled to its citizenship. Citizenship itself is a legal concept concerned with the distribution of rights and duties, but is also linked to nationality because citizenship is a prerequisite of membership of the political community (the

nation-state).<sup>1</sup> The meaning of these terms is often confused in political discourse, but Powellites on the Tory Right have stressed that the legal rights entailed by citizenship do not equate with membership of the nation. Membership of the latter is based on subjective feelings of loyalty and allegiance, plus shared cultural values. The distinction between citizenship and nationality mirrors that between political and cultural accounts of the nation, the former focusing on political rights in a territorial, sovereign state, while the latter looks at ethnic and cultural links between compatriots. In British law the concepts of citizenship and nationality have been further confused by anomalies in immigration and nationality laws. The first Thatcher administration sought to rectify this through the British Nationality Act (1981).

By the late 1970s widespread agreement existed on the need for a significant reform of Britain's citizenship and nationality law. The 1948 British Nationality Act created a Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies, and recognized the citizenships of independent Commonwealth countries holders of which would nevertheless continue to be regarded as British subjects. The Act, drawn up in a liberal era when politicians still felt bound by imperial commitments to Empire and Commonwealth, crucially failed to include restrictions on immigration. This raised the prospect of large scale immigration because under the 1948 Act all Commonwealth citizens were recognized as British subjects with right of abode in the UK (Bevan, 1986; Dummett & Nicol, 1990). The 1948 Act also failed to adequately define or distinguish between "subjects" and "citizens". Also, there were no statutory rights and duties associated with citizenship. Allegiance, while



still an important concept in relation to citizenship through "ius soli" or nationality based on birth in the territories ruled by the British monarch, was complicated by the potential for dual status and continued British responsibility for residents of the colonies.

The restrictions on immigration under the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the 1968 Act of the same name, and the 1971 Immigration Act divorced citizenship of the UK and Colonies from the right of abode in the UK by denying legal access to many UK citizens without close connection to the UK through birth or residence. The 1971 Act introduced a short-term solution to the perceived dangers of large-scale immigration by creating a category of "patrials" for those UK and Colonies citizens who had right of abode in Britain. "Patriality" thus referred to the status of those free from immigration control, and hence able to exercise their right of abode in the UK. Non-patrials still had the title of UK and Colonies citizen, but under the 1971 Act were denied a fundamental citizenship right, that of right of access to and abode in the territory of which they were legally a citizen. The "patriality" category was intended only as a stopgap: the Home Office and the major political parties recognized the need for a new Nationality Act which would reunite British citizenship with rights of access to and abode in the UK, and ensure that only those with close connections to the UK through family ties would have right of abode. This would thus link the legal concept of citizenship with the subjective idea of nationality, or membership of the national community.

In opposition, the Conservative Party advocated a fundamental overhaul of nationality law to overcome the distinction that the 1971 Immigration

Act had instigated between the legal status of citizenship and nationality as a belonging to the nation as a cultural community. A pamphlet on citizenship and nationality from the Society of Conservative Lawyers, which included future Home Secretary Leon Brittan, recommended a new citizenship based on the "homeland principle" in which only those with close family connections to the UK would have a right of abode here (Committee of the Society of Conservative Lawyers, 1976). These proposals were supported by other Conservative pamphleteers like Richard Plender and Edward Gardner who wanted citizenship and nationality law to provide a formal basis of national identity for the British who had thus far been denied the benefits of a clear legal identity (Plender, 1978; Gardner, 1980). Separate citizenships for each of the dependent territories were also recommended, but were rejected in the framing of the 1981 Act.

The 1981 British Nationality Act (BNA) drew on recommendations made in the 1980 White Paper and the Labour Government's Green Paper, a point emphasized by Conservative Home Secretary William Whitelaw in the face of Labour opposition to the Bill in the Commons. The Thatcher government wanted to end the system under which anyone born within the UK was automatically a British citizen, able to transfer this citizenship to his offspring, believing that it was open to abuse. They argued that people with no interest in settling in this country could have their children born here solely in order for them to enjoy the rights of British citizenship. It was argued that it was undesirable for children born in the UK to temporary residents (eg students) to have the right to re-enter the country in their adult lives without having any close association with Britain.



The 1981 British Nationality Act created three main categories of citizenship from the old category of UK and Colonies citizenship: British Citizen, British Dependent Territories Citizen and British Overseas Citizen. This was the first time in which British citizenship was legally defined. On the commencement of the Act in 1983, all those legally resident and settled in the UK would become British citizens. The BNA modified the centuries old "ius soli" basis of citizenship under which citizenship had been determined by place of birth, drawing on the feudal notion of allegiance to the sovereign on whose territory one was born (Dummett & Nicol, 1990; Macdonald & Blake, 1982). Under the 1981 Act, British citizenship was to be transferred primarily through descent (the continental "ius sanguinis" principle) and was related to "close association" with the UK. The need for close association through parents or grandparents born in the UK meant that very few residents of the New Commonwealth would have the right of abode in Britain. Under the terms of the BNA, a child born in the UK can only become a British citizen if either of his/her parents is a British citizen or is settled here. Citizenship by descent is not transmissible as of right beyond the first generation for children born abroad, again restricting citizenship to those with a "close connection" to the UK. British citizenship can also be acquired through registration or naturalization, though this rests on a decision of the Home Secretary, with the claimant having no right of appeal. An amendment to the Bill did allow for any child born in the UK who did not acquire British citizenship at birth to acquire citizenship after ten years continuous residence, regardless of the status of his/her parents. This was a move back towards the "ius soli" principle of citizenship through birth in the UK.

The limitations on the transmission of British citizenship went beyond those envisaged in the Labour Green Paper. The right of a foreign woman married to a British citizen to register as British was removed: they must now apply for naturalization. But the government argued that sex equality had been introduced in the BNA by allowing for the transmission of British citizenship through the mother. British citizenship overall was to be related to settlement and close connection with the UK. The automatic right to citizenship through birth in the UK was removed and citizenship could be transmitted automatically only to those having close family connections with Britain. Those seeking British citizenship through naturalization or registration first had to be resident in the UK for three years if they were the spouse of a UK citizen, with the Home Secretary having increased discretionary powers in determining the success of applications. The preliminary requirements for naturalization were residence, good character, a good knowledge of the English or Welsh languages and an intention to settle here permanently. Again the intention was to limit British citizenship to those with close links with Britain.

Only the category of British Citizen entailed the right of abode in the United Kingdom. This category effectively codified that of "patrial" introduced in the 1971 Immigration Act, ensuring that British Citizenship meant freedom from immigration control. The status of British Overseas Citizen followed immigration rules as it brought with it no right of access or abode. But this British Overseas Citizenship was almost entirely meaningless as it gave no substantial rights to its holders, except for the status of British nationals for the purpose of international law, and would fade out over time as it cannot be transmitted to descendants. It did not



entail citizenship of any actually existing state or right of access and abode in the UK:the category meant nothing in terms of national or legal identity.The BOC category did though phase out the status of "British subject".

Many Conservative MPs were concerned about having a single category of British Dependent Territories Citizen rather than separate citizenships for individual colonies.Conservative backbenchers took up the causes of various dependent territories,arguing that the proposed category weakened British links with the colonies and adversely affected the citizenship rights of colonial residents.The category raised a similar problem to the former "UK and Colonies" citizenship by failing to relate citizenship to any concrete territorial entity,thus not providing for a proper nationality,allegiance or identity.The Government initially opposed making special citizenship or immigration provisions for Hong Kong,Gibraltar or the Falklands,but were forced to moderate the initial proposals.Gibraltarians had to be given special access to British citizenship so as to fall in line with Gibraltar's membership of the EC (as part of the UK's European possessions). The Falkland Islanders were given special status after the conflict with Argentina under the 1983 British Nationality (Amendment) Act.In 1990 special provisions were made to allow selected residents of Hong Kong to enter the UK before the Chinese administrative takeover in 1997 (p.286).

The aim of the BNA according to Whitelaw was to provide a "more meaningful citizenship for those who have close links with the United Kingdom" (Hansard,vol 997,col 935).This meant re-uniting citizenship and the right of abode in the UK.The right of abode was the only direct right of

British citizenship outlined in the Act. Calls for a comprehensive statement of rights from MPs of all parties were rejected as too complicated and covered by other areas of national legislation. This followed the general rejection by Conservatives of a codification of citizens' rights, for example in a Bill of Rights, as alien to the British constitution. The Act also failed to define "British nationals" and significant anomalies remained.

Critics of the BNA in the Opposition parties, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Runnymede Trust saw the Act as a key element of the Conservative's drive to strengthen immigration controls. The government was accused of racial discrimination for basing citizenship on "close connection", particularly when special treatment was afforded to the residents of Gibraltar and later, the Falkland Islands. The Act raised concern among the country's ethnic minority communities, who feared their status and rights were weakened by the alterations to "ius soli" and the need to register or naturalize, the fees for which rose substantially. Critics of the BNA argued that the Act weakened the citizenship rights of immigrants, and contravened the spirit if not the letter of the European Convention of Human Rights eg the right to family life (A.C. Evans, 1983). The BNA did not enjoy an easy passage through Parliament. It was strongly opposed by the Labour leadership, despite their acceptance of the need for reform, and the similarities between the BNA and the Labour Green Paper. A large number of amendments to the Bill were forced by Conservative backbenchers, committee stages and by the House of Lords, but its essence was not radically altered.



The BNA had, for the first time, provided a legal status of British citizenship and removed the traditional principle of "jus soli" from its primary place in British nationality laws, linking British citizenship with "close association" and freedom from immigration controls. But it did not provide a clear statement on the membership of the national community. David Dixon greatly exaggerates the scope and clarity of the BNA by arguing that the Act provided the "formalized expression of a reconstructed national identity" based on imperial sentiments of racial superiority (Dixon, 1983, p. 175). In revising nationality laws, the first Thatcher government did not produce a conceptual clarification of citizenship or redefine national identity as Powellism urged. In terms of nationhood and national identity the Act added little flesh to the bones of the legal status of British Citizenship. The Act did not outline the rights and obligations of British citizens, except for right of abode, even in the light of Britain's membership of the European Community.

Many in the Conservative Party and beyond had hoped that the new nationality law would lay the foundations for a clearer definition of national identity, but the 1981 Act did not do this (see Chapter Four for a discussion of Powell's views). Both right-wing Conservatives and the Runnymede Trust criticized the BNA for failing to outline the rights and duties associated with citizenship, or its relationship to allegiance (Runnymede Trust, 1980). The BNA defined those people who were legal citizens of the British state, it did not address national identity in the way in which many on the Right envisaged it. A nationality or citizenship law such as the BNA cannot define a nation. The language of ethnicity, culture, shared history and traditions are alien to it. The Act can say who is or is not

British in legal terms, and many argue that it does so in ways which discriminate against non-Europeans. Under the Act, birth in British territory does not automatically bring with it British citizenship. The legal status of British citizenship is no longer primarily based on birth within the territory of sovereign and the assumption of allegiance which goes with it.

Membership of the national community (in the subjective sense of Englishness or Britishness) is not the same as legal citizenship which affords membership of the state as a political community. Under the 1981 Act, the legally resident ethnic minority population were citizens of the British state, but Powellites and cultural conservatives do not equate this with membership of the national community. Thus Powell, Casey and others refuse to recognize the existence of "black Englishmen". Even for more moderate Conservatives, members of the ethnic minorities are not regarded as integrated into British society unless they exhibit the outward signs of British identity ie speaking the language of the majority and adopting the British way of life and traditions. In the language of the conservative nation, with its emphasis on political culture, shared traditions and the subjective nature of nationhood, the British Nationality Act only defines membership of the state (ie citizenship), which is by no means the same as membership of the nation or nationhood. This separation of membership of state and nation underlies the conservative approach to immigration and the integration of the immigrant communities into British society.



## Immigration Policy.

The codification of British citizenship in the BNA was based on the restrictions on right of abode made under the 1971 Immigration Act. The BNA itself necessitated a further tightening of immigration controls by a government publicly committed to reducing immigration as a means of improving race relations. The 1979 Conservative Manifesto proclaimed a "firm but fair" dual approach of strict immigration controls and equal opportunities for the ethnic minorities.

"Firm immigration control for the future is essential if we are to achieve good community relations. It will end persistent fears about levels of immigration and will remove from those settled, and in many cases born here, the label of 'immigrant'." (Conservative Party Election Manifesto, 1979, p.20).

The manifesto made eight specific proposals to reduce immigration. These proposals included an end to the practice of allowing permanent settlement for those who came here for a temporary stay and a reduction in the secondary immigration of parents, grandparents and children over 18. However several of the manifesto proposals ran into difficulties early on in the lifetime of the first term (Layton-Henry, 1986, pp.77-80). Two of the key proposals, a quota system placing a finite level on the number of immigrants to be allowed entry, and a register of dependents proved to be impractical and were dropped in the face of Home Office opposition. The promised end to the 1974 concession to husbands and male fiancés was also modified. The 1980 changes to the immigration rules restricted the entry of husbands of women with close connections with Britain, and aimed to prevent

such entry if its sole purpose was deemed to be settlement. Elderly dependents were only allowed to enter if they would be wholly supported by their children or grandchildren. These early changes set the tone of Conservative immigration policy by seeking to prevent the entry of immigrants unless they were closely connected to Britain and restricting the entry of those who would have to be supported by the state, including refugees (Gordon, 1989).

The 1982 changes in immigration rules were introduced in the light of the new category of British Citizenship introduced in the previous year's nationality law. All British citizens were to be allowed to have their husbands and fiancées join them if they met the conditions of registration, but those women who were not citizens did not enjoy this right. This was criticized by many on the Tory Right, including Stanbrook and Budgen, as a reversal of the specific manifesto commitment and as inconsistent with the stated goal of a "halt to immigration". The government's decision to allow 10,000 Vietnamese refugees living in Hong Kong to come to Britain revealed a pragmatism not in keeping with Thatcher's populist determination to reduce immigration to a minimum.

In Thatcher's second term, immigration issues were not as high on the political agenda. The BNA and the changes to immigration rules it brought about meant that immigration would be kept to minimum levels, ending the possibility of a substantial influx of New Commonwealth immigrants. But the government was determined that any loopholes in immigration laws be closed, although the numbers of cases involved would be small. The tabloid press and the Tory Right vigorously campaigned against illegal immigration and abuses



of the social security system. In 1985 and 1986, in the context of this anti-immigration climate, the government acted to counter increases in asylum applications by imposing visa requirements on visitors from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria. The 1987 Immigration (Carriers Liability) Act made it an offence for airlines to bring people into the UK without proper documentation. Responsibility for the administration of immigration controls was thereby extended to airlines.

The tightening of immigration laws to prevent illegal entry and fraudulent asylum applications was promised in the party's 1987 election manifesto. The 1988 Immigration Act again sought to reduce immigration and tighten loopholes though the number of cases involved was small. It ended the automatic right for men settled in Britain to bring their dependents into the country. The Act appeased the Tory Right and popular press by making right of entry for dependents conditional on them being provided with adequate accommodation and financial support by their families, rather than seeking welfare from the state. Overstaying became a criminal offence, rights of appeal were restricted and the entry of second wives from polygamous marriages was outlawed as inappropriate to British society.

The future of Hong Kong in the light of its return to China in 1997 necessitated the 1990 British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act. The Act was designed to encourage Hong Kong residents to remain in Hong Kong by offering key members of that society the safeguard of right of abode in the UK. The Governor of Hong Kong would choose 50,000 leading residents of the colony, who, with their spouses and families, would be assured of a British passport with right of abode in the UK. A points system and a number of

categories would be used to determine who should become eligible. The scheme was criticized by Labour as elitist, while Norman Tebbit was a key figure in a revolt by the Conservative Right who opposed the prospect of a large influx of immigrants.

John Major's first period in government maintained the Thatcherite trend of tightening immigration rules. In the 1991/2 Parliamentary session, Home Secretary Kenneth Baker introduced an Asylum Bill to identify bogus applications for asylum and speed up the process as a whole. The Government was reacting to a rise in the number of asylum applications from 5,000 a year in 1988 to 30,000 in 1990. Baker argued that only a small minority of those coming to the UK had a well-founded fear of persecution as envisaged under the United Nations Convention on Refugees which forbade countries from sending back genuine refugees. The majority were economic migrants hoping for a better standard of living in the UK, looking to by-pass the strict immigration rules for people from Africa and South Asia. The asylum process would be tightened at air and sea ports, document tests would be stricter and cases would be speeded up. But the Bill was the subject of widespread opposition inside and outside Parliament, with critics arguing that genuine refugees would be sent back because they would find it impossible to produce the necessary documentation. The Bar Council felt that the Bill could be rejected by the European Court of Human Rights, while the United Nations warned that it could contravene its Convention on Refugees.

The Bill was amended by the House of Lords and dropped by the Government in February 1992 as a difficult passage appeared inevitable in the run-up to the general election. However, both the Conservative Manifesto



and the 1992 Queen's Speech included a commitment to reintroduce an Asylum Bill. In the election campaign, Baker stressed Labour's opposition to the Bill claiming that they would allow a flood of refugees to enter, and arguing that controls were needed to prevent a continental-style fascist backlash against immigrants.

The rise in applications for asylum was a cause of concern in most West European states. EC members argued that the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees was becoming unworkable as it had not envisaged the present scale of refugees. The internal market programme produced EC pressure for co-ordinated policies on immigration and asylum seekers in the light of the free movement of peoples planned for 1992. The UK has co-operated with the Schengen Group, founded in 1985 by Germany, France and the Benelux countries, on exchanging information on refugees. However the government has not joined the Schengen Group, fearing that a common immigration policy would mean replacing its own effective border controls with internal controls such as the continental practice of identity cards. The UK has though been involved in the Trevi Group which co-operates on terrorism and crime in Europe. In 1987 EC member states agreed to common practices on carriers duties and documentation in asylum cases. Since then the trend in the Community has appeared to be towards an integrated policy on immigration, though the Maastricht summit did not produce a common policy as some states had hoped.

Overall then, the Thatcher administrations introduced a series of curbs on immigration and a stricter enforcement of immigration laws, resulting in a drop in the number of people accepted for settlement in the UK. These

measures were the policy results of the Thatcherite belief that "firm but fair immigration controls are essential for harmonious and improving community relations" (The Next Moves Forward, 1987 Conservative Manifesto, p.59). Good race relations meant allaying the fears of the majority about the rate of immigration and the growth and concentration of ethnic minority communities. The party had held out the prospect of a halt to immigration in 1979, and though immigration continues, the numbers have been reduced and the application procedure changed so as to discourage immigration. The "firm but fair" immigration policies have been shaped by a desire to limit New Commonwealth immigration: immigrants are presented as a problem for social order, race relations and the British way of life. Though ethnic minority families resident in the UK have had their rights curtailed by restrictions on their chances of having family members join them in the UK, the government presents immigration controls as in the best interests of the ethnic minority communities themselves. Immigrants must become accustomed to the British way of life and accept the legitimate fears of the majority about their presence here.

"It would not be in the interests of the ethnic minorities themselves if there was a prospect of further mass inward movement. That prospect would increase social tensions, particularly in our cities. That is why we say firm immigration control is essential if we are to have good community relations." (Home Secretary Douglas Hurd in Hansard, vol 122, col 779).

The Tory Right were not satisfied by the extent of the government's changes to immigration law, with the Monday Club urging repatriation. Although the Conservative Party rejected calls for repatriation and denounced racism within its ranks, by bringing race issues to the fore and presenting immigrants as a problem, it helped foster a climate in which



racial prejudice was not so readily stigmatized. Though the Salisbury Group adherents had little direct impact on policy-making in the party, it became more legitimate for Conservative MPs to challenge the multi-cultural society in the name of "common sense" or national identity. Powellite rhetoric was heard on the Tory backbenches, and although the Powellite rump had little practical input into policy-making, it was indirectly influential in fostering the new attitude in race politics.

#### Equal Opportunity and Integration.

The commitment to a "firm but fair" immigration policy was coupled with a desire for better race relations, to be achieved through equal opportunities for members of the ethnic minorities and through further integration into British society. However, though immigration control and improved race relations are linked in Conservative discourse, in the realm of government policy the emphasis has been predominantly on immigration. There has been no co-ordinated or state-directed approach to racial disadvantage or discrimination by the Conservatives. Immigration issues may have been politically centre-stage in the first term, but racial disadvantage did not achieve the same level of priority.

Instead, Conservative policies on race relations appear to have been reactive, formed in relation to specific events, notably the 1981 inner city riots. Policy has often been concerned with conflict management or damage limitation rather than with long-term solutions. Many initiatives have been left to others eg local government on anti-racism, and the Commission for

Racial Equality's role in providing data and co-ordination on race issues. Central government has failed to produce a co-ordinated approach under both Labour and Conservative administrations. Since 1979, the Conservatives have pursued free-market policies believing that they will encourage the growth of a black middle-class stratum of professionals and businessmen who be seen as an example of the potential for successful integration in British society. This free market strategy has though exacerbated the disadvantages of minority communities. Integration and the multi-cultural society are important areas which the language of the conservative nation must adapt to, but even in the case of problems raised by multi-cultural education and by the Rushdie affair, conservatism has offered little positive guidance, choosing management of the plural society not state-led initiative.

The Thatcher governments frequently expressed their commitment to improving community relations, stressing the formal equality of ethnic minority members and promising equal opportunities to them. The party opposes discrimination on racial grounds, but equally opposes any measures of positive discrimination to overcome racial disadvantage. Thus the 1987 manifesto stated:

"We want to see members of the ethnic minorities assuming positions of leadership alongside their fellow citizens and accepting their full share of responsibility. Racial injustice is an injustice and can have no place in a tolerant and civilized society. Progress towards better community relations must be on a basis of equality. Reverse discrimination is itself an injustice and if it were to be introduced it would undermine the achievement and example of those who had risen on their merits." (The Next Moves Forward, Conservative Manifesto 1987, p.59).



Improvements to the position of minority communities then have to be achieved through the free-market system where the emphasis is on self-discipline and self-improvement. State action to improve the lot of the disadvantaged is not regarded as a preferable course of action, being costly and inefficient, undermining achievement and producing a culture of dependency. However instead of improving the position of most blacks, a reliance on the market locks them into their sphere of disadvantage. For those lacking the resources to compete in the market, promises of achievement mean little. Equal opportunities cannot be achieved in a market economy where those with the least cannot compete effectively. Thatcherite policies have exacerbated the plight of those inner city blacks suffering unemployment, poor housing, eroded welfare rights, educational disadvantage and racial discrimination.

Thatcherism's neo-liberal emphasis on self-reliance and improvement through the market is not able to provide the lift needed for the minority communities to break out of the cycle of inner city deprivation and disadvantage. For some communities though the idea is more attractive. The founder of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society, Narinda Saroop, noted that the values of family, discipline and self-reliance accorded with the values of "naturally conservative" Asian businessmen and professionals.<sup>2</sup> However, this has not been significantly reflected in the voting patterns of Asians, or in their representation and involvement in the party. Instead they have become alienated by other Conservative policies on race and immigration.

Thatcherism's neo-liberal strand also approximates to the Jewish values of freedom, enterprise and individualism, which Thatcher herself recognized in

speeches to the St.Lawrence Jewry in 1978 and 1981 (Thatcher,1989).Thatcher forged close links with the Jewish business community and Jewish voters in her Finchley constituency. She was sympathetic to the opinions of British Jews on the Palestinian question and on the issue of the ritual slaughter of animals (shechita).The Chief Rabbi for much of her premiership, Lord Jacobovitz,was also an enthusiastic Thatcherite.

Racial discrimination is publicly criticized by the Conservative leadership,but many in the party question the desirability and effectiveness of race relations legislation.Forty-three Tory MPs defied the party's order to abstain and voted against the 1976 Race Relations Act.In 1981,a party publication noted that:

"The Conservative Party is committed to the ideal of racial harmony.It believes that there must be equal treatment for all citizens under the law.It recognizes,however,that although a body like the Commission for Racial Equality,backed by race relations legislation,can check the most flagrant cases of discrimination,ultimately racial harmony depends on the people of Britain as a whole,in all communities,being prepared to live and work together and to respect each other's way of life." (Politics Today,no 11,1981,p.200).

The Thatcherite commitment to restricting the role of the state has worked against a strengthening of state action to counter direct or indirect racial discrimination.The 1976 Race Relations Act remains on the statute book though doubts remain about the government's commitment to it. The neo-liberal focus on the individual also hinders special treatment for minority communities,and tends to reject arguments that ethnic minority status is a key factor in racial disadvantage.The prescribed solution is for blacks to improve themselves as individuals within the market and become more closely integrated into British society,so breaking down strong ethnic



community bonds. The onus is on individual blacks themselves and not on the majority of the population whose prejudices are perceived as legitimate by the New Right. The language of the Thatcherite nation rejects the concept of institutionalized racism, claiming that British society is not racist, though some individuals may be. Blacks are primarily seen as individuals having to achieve self-improvement and adaptation for themselves, not as members of communities with special disadvantages. The 1981 riots and the Home Affairs Select Committee report on racial disadvantage though led to a greater willingness to view problems in terms of racial discrimination and disadvantage. Ethnic monitoring was introduced into the civil service and local authorities were encouraged to direct money to deal specifically with racial disadvantage by reforming Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act.

#### Riots, Law and Order and Race Relations.

Since the mid-1970s, the popular Tory press, the police and sections of Conservative opinion had linked rising crime, and especially "muggings" in inner city areas, with black youth. Relations between police and young blacks in the inner cities had worsened during the years of recession. Racial prejudice among the police, poor relations between police and the community, and the lack of police officers from the ethnic minorities contributed to mutual distrust. Many blacks felt they were singled out for police harassment under the "sus" laws, which the Home Affairs Select Committee criticised, and which was later abolished. In 1981 civil disturbances raged in Bristol, Brixton, Toxteth and Moss Side. Despite some media reports and the comments of Powell in the Commons, the disturbances were not racially

motivated, but were largely directed against the police. Instead of pursuing a firm law and order line on the riots, the Government took a liberal-pragmatic view, accepting that the multiple disadvantages suffered by ethnic minorities in the inner cities were underlying factors in the build-up of tension. The 1981 riots thus gave added impetus to programmes to overcome racial discrimination and disadvantage and made the government willing, in the short term at least, to recognize the race politics dimension of inner city problems.

The Government broadly accepted the recommendations of both the 1981 Home Affairs Select Committee report on racial disadvantage and the Scarman Report on the riots. Whitelaw accepted the findings of the Scarman Report in the Commons, but again rejected calls for positive discrimination.

"What is commended is positive action to recognize and to deal with more effectively than at present the special needs of ethnic minorities where they exist in education, employment and housing. We are not talking of giving black people a favourable advantage over white people. What we are saying is that everyone in our society should have equal opportunities, and that those who start from a disadvantaged position may need special help to provide them with similar opportunities to those enjoyed by the majority of the population." (Whitelaw, in Hansard, vol 14, col 1006).

Some on the Right of the party were openly critical of the Scarman Report and of the government's more positive approach to race relations. They had hoped for a hard-line government stance on law and order issues, condemning all criminal acts, backing the police and criticizing black youths for not respecting authority or British values. Ivor Stanbrook feared that the Scarman report would place the majority at a disadvantage by "going easy on the blacks", arguing that the solution to the social tensions



produced by ethnic communities was a stronger immigration policy and blacks "living up to the standards involved in being a British citizen" (Stanbrook in Hansard, vol 14, col 1045).

A second wave of inner city riots occurred in 1985 and on this occasion the government abandoned its liberal-pragmatic approach, reverting to a traditional law and order strategy. These riots in Handsworth, Brixton, Toxteth and Tottenham had resulted in the deaths of two Asians and that of PC Blakelock on the Broadwater Farm estate whose horrific murder prompted media outrage. The government responded to this general mood by identifying criminality rather than disadvantage as the prime cause of the riots. The police were given extra funds for riot training and equipment. Instead of positive legislation addressing disadvantage, the government relied on the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act and other public order legislation. A rise in racial violence did prompt the government to press the police for a positive response, but the Blakelock Trial confirmed black fears about the unfairness of the police and criminal justice systems.

#### Local Politics and Education.

The more positive approach to race relations after the inner city riots of 1981 did not though bring a co-ordinated central strategy on overcoming racial disadvantage and indirect racial discrimination. Policy lacked sufficient central co-ordination as responsibility was split between the Home Office and the Department of the Environment, where Sir George Young was given special responsibility for race relations. The government's focus was on improving the inner city environment, leaving to local authorities

the tasks of improving race relations and directing money and resources to the special needs of ethnic minorities. This local agenda of race relations policy produced a growth in the "race relations industry" in local authorities, which in turn produced criticism from the New Right and the media, especially on "anti-racism" and multi-cultural education.<sup>3</sup>

Education became a focus for struggles about the direction of integration during the later years of the Thatcher governments when local education authority anti-racist strategies were criticized by Conservatives. Various controversial incidents forced education into the political limelight. In 1983, Ray Honeyford the headmaster of the mainly Asian Drummond Middle School in Bradford was critical of multi-ethnic education, believing that it lowered standards and placed minority white pupils at a disadvantage. In 1985 he was dismissed, the High Court overturning a successful appeal he had made against the local education authority. West Yorkshire saw more controversy in 1987 when the parents of white children sought to "opt out" of local authority control to avoid their children joining predominantly Asian schools. Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, in this case supported Kirklees Council against the parents. His predecessor Sir Keith Joseph had though been publicly critical of the anti-racist and multi-ethnic education policies adopted by ILEA and other local education authorities. In 1990 problems of race and education surfaced again in West Yorkshire as white parents in Dewsbury withdrew their children from schools which held multi-religious assemblies, forming the Parental Alliance for Choice in Education (PACE). In October 1991 the High Court ruled that Cleveland County Council was correct in allowing a white mother to withdraw her five year old daughter from the 60% Asian Abingdon Road Infant School



and send her instead to a predominantly white school. Mr Justice MacPherson argued that discreditable motives of parents had to be ignored when upholding the right of the parent to choose their child's school.

The 1985 Swann Report on education had recommended a strategy of "education for all", with teachers preparing all pupils for life in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society. The report wanted children to grow up regarding Britain as a pluralist society, its emphasis being on all pupils rather than just advocating special resources to be directed towards ethnic minority pupils was a significant change of strategy and one not met with great enthusiasm by the Conservative party. The 1988 Education Reform Act did little to encourage multi-cultural teaching. The national curriculum has relegated multi-ethnic teaching to a low level in school timetables and educational priorities (Troyna, 1990). The government's preferred direction for the history national curriculum, focusing on aspects of British history, also runs counter to a development of cultural diversity and a multi-ethnic sense of national identity. The Act also instructed most schools to provide daily "collective worship..wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", provoking the disputes mentioned above which arose in Dewsbury and Wakefield. The greater power for school governors to decide the direction of their schools may also limit multi-cultural education in predominantly white areas. In June 1992 the High Court ruled that the Bishop Challenor Roman Catholic School in East London could give priority to Christian over local Hindu or Muslim children in its admissions policy so as to preserve its religious character. The ERA's provision for schools to opt-out of local control, grant-maintained schools and then seek a change in their character five years later raises the possibility of a rise in the

number of single race/religion schools. But Baker indicated that he favoured mixed race schools and the government has been reluctant to allow Muslim voluntary aided schools. Meanwhile, the educational achievements of pupils of West Indian origins remain lower than those of the white majority, though the achievements of pupils of Indian background are higher. In general, anti-racist policies have often had negative implications, adopting the New Right's emphasis on the centrality of cultural and racial distinctions between "black" and "white".

#### The Rushdie Affair and the Plural Society.

The Conservative's desire to keep problems involved in integration and the management of a plural society off the centre's political agenda by delegating responsibility for race relations to local authorities was undermined by the controversy surrounding anti-racist local education policies. However it was the Rushdie affair which brought the problems inherent in the management of a plural society to the fore. The Rushdie affair centered on the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" which offended many Muslims with its blasphemous references to Islam and the prophet Mohammed. The book provoked outrage in British Muslim communities, and the author's death was demanded in Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini's "fatwa" of February 1989. The Rushdie affair raised many political questions about the nature of liberalism (in relation to free speech, toleration and blasphemy laws) plus problems of community and identity in a plural society (Parekh, 1990, a).



The Rushdie affair revealed the limitations to the integration of ethnic communities with their own strong communal identities into British society and the British way of life. The dominant concept of integration in Britain, as outlined by then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in 1966 was based around equal opportunity, cultural diversity and mutual tolerance. The alternative view urges the assimilation of ethnic communities into the way of life of the indigenous population, with the ethnic minorities adopting the cultural values and behaviour of their adopted country rather than maintaining their own conflicting lifestyles. The Jenkins approach to integration has shaped many areas of public policy (eg in the Swann Report, race relations legislation and, in a few cases, special legal arrangements catering for the religious beliefs of ethnic minorities). Since 1979 the Thatcher governments have followed an integrationist approach, but by managing the present arrangements rather than through a co-ordinated state sponsored policy for the development of a plural society. They have opposed differential treatment or the use of state legislation in community relations.

As a plural society, Britain contains ethnic communities which have their own strong communal identities, drawn from cultural traditions, shared experiences and religious beliefs. The Muslim community's strong sense of religious identity was at the heart of the Rushdie affair, as many British Muslims were attracted to Islamic fundamentalism as an alternative to Western secularism. The values of militant Islam were at odds with British traditions of the rule of law, and the division widened with the "fatwa" and Muslim demands for the blasphemy laws to take account of their faith. During the Rushdie affair the government tried to placate Muslims by

expressing understanding of their feelings, but stressing the values of British society. Essentially the government wanted to uphold the status quo and avoid having to react to the demands of a pluralist society. The view was most strikingly illustrated in July 1989 in two open letters by John Patten, the Home Office Minister with responsibility for race relations. The first was addressed to leading Muslims, focusing on the government's response to "The Satanic Verses" and the role of Muslims in British society. The second letter entitled "On Being British" was sent to the Home Office Advisory Council on Race Relations and looked at the need for Muslim integration into British society.

In the first letter, Patten stated that the main aim of the government was a society of diversity without separation, with ethnic minorities playing a full participating role. Moves towards such a society required the ethnic minorities to adjust to the British way of life, its language and traditions.

"As with language, so with knowledge of institutions, history and traditions. Of course, British Muslims should be brought up faithful in the religion of Islam and well-versed in the Holy Koran. But if they are also to make the most of their lives and opportunities as British citizens, then they must also have a clear understanding of British democratic processes, of its laws, the system of government and the history that lies behind them, and indeed of their own rights and responsibilities." (Patten in Commission for Racial Equality (a), 1989, p.85).

The shared link between communities in a plural Britain would be the sense of Britishness instilled by knowledge of British history and traditions. Patten stressed that this would not mean ethnic communities having to forfeit their faith or roots, but these would have to exist within a framework of British traditions, and respecting British law and the



obligations of living in Britain are of paramount importance. Thus government ministers claimed to understand the anger raised by "The Satanic Verses" but urged Muslims to accept the priority of British traditions of free speech and the rule of law.

"At the heart of our thinking is a Britain where Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and others can all work and live together, each retaining proudly their own faith and identity, but each sharing in common the bond of being by birth or choice, British." (Patten, op.cit., p.87).

In the second letter, Patten argued that "one cannot be British on one's own exclusive terms or on a selective basis, nor is there room for dual loyalties where those loyalties openly contradict one another". In the case of the Rushdie affair, some British Muslims had publicly burned "The Satanic Verses", called for civil disobedience as a means of extending the blasphemy laws to cover Islam, and supported the Ayatollah's death sentence on Rushdie. Such activities clashed with the duty to respect the rule of law (including freedom of speech) which went with British citizenship. Thatcher, Baker and Howe all called Rushdie's book "offensive" but warned Muslims not to break the law and were, of course, scathing of Iran's involvement in the affair. Patten wished to see "integration and active involvement in the mainstream". This meant that Muslims would have to respect British law and ensure that their children were fluent in the English language plus had a good understanding of British history and culture. Though arguing that such integration would not mean assimilation as it was compatible with toleration and diversity, the conflict of loyalties provoked by the Rushdie affair could only be satisfactorily settled if Muslims' overriding loyalty to the British state and law. Home Office Minister Timothy Renton suggested

that this could extend to the equal treatment of women, as expected by British culture.<sup>4</sup>

The Rushdie affair saw the Conservative's trying to manage the status quo, rather than adapting to the pluralist society in a new way. Despite the strains imposed on community relations and Muslim confidence in British government and society, the government continued to see community relations as outside the scope of state action. In terms of the conservative nation, the Rushdie affair again revealed that ethnic minorities had a place in the "nation" but has to substantially adapt to British ways to be full members. The nation in conservative thought is not primarily defined in ethnic terms, but in terms of subjective senses of identity and belonging. If ethnic minorities are to be British they must immerse themselves in British history, traditions, institutions, and the English language. Though cultural diversity is accepted as an inevitable part of modern society, this sense of Britishness must be paramount. Britishness brings with it duties of allegiance and willingness to adapt to the cultural expectations of the majority. Integration must encourage ethnic minorities to become full members of British society, so one of the few acts of central intervention in the process has insisted on a common teaching of history to encourage a sense of Britishness through an appreciation of British traditions and institutions.



### The Politics of Race in the Conservative Party.

The leadership of the Conservative Party has insisted that racism is unwelcome in the party, with both Thatcher and Major rounding on racists during times of controversy in the party. Powell's expulsion from the Shadow Cabinet showed that the right-wing would not be able to steer Conservative policies on race. However, a Powellite rump remains in the party and at Westminster. Though the party took a more hard-line position on immigration since Thatcher became leader, few of the MPs associated with extreme views on race issues have held government posts. In debates on immigration, nationality and race relations the Tory Right has often been critical of government policy, from accusing it of reneging on manifesto commitments in the early 1980s to the revolt on the Hong Kong nationality proposals in 1990.

A 1981 Monday Club pamphlet on race politics by the MP Harvey Proctor and Club member John Pinniger called on the Conservative Party to adopt a programme of repatriation and abolish the Commission for Racial Equality. Proctor argued that the party had failed to put into effect its 1970 election commitment that there would be "no further large scale immigration" and proceeded to play Powell's "numbers game" about the future growth of ethnic minorities. Proctor also echoed Powell's apocalyptic predictions of a breakdown of British society and values, claiming that an end to immigration alone was not enough, and that repatriation was "common sense". In his article, Pinniger argued that racial discrimination could not be deterred by state action or through the CRE, and that anti-racist policies were discriminating against whites.

The Monday Club has long been involved in controversy because of its views on immigration and repatriation. It is not a part of the Conservative Party organization, but its members have to be Conservative supporters. In the early 1970s, the Monday Club was dominated by the extreme Right, including people sympathetic to the National Front, while in 1984 a spate of resignations and accusations followed further claims of racism in the group. A Young Conservative Report of 1984 claimed that "extremist and racist forces are at work in the Conservative Party" with the Monday Club "an important channel for racist sentiments".<sup>5</sup> The report's authors also accused MPs on the Right of the party of using race "in an emotive manner, whipping up bigotry and prejudice" and berated Mrs Thatcher for not doing enough to combat racism in the party (she had been absent from the platform during a 1983 conference debate on race relations).

The Right of the party contains a number of MPs with Powellite views on race and immigration issues. The strategies recommended include the assimilation of existing ethnic groups into British culture, meaning the abandonment of diverse identities depicted as threatening the British way of life. Powellite MPs refuse to accept that immigrants can ever become true Englishmen. The Tory Right consistently presses for hard-line immigration policies, demanding a complete end to immigration, and, in some cases calling for a government funded programme of voluntary repatriation. In policy terms, this Powellite rump has had little influence in the party with few of its members reaching positions in government.

In Parliamentary debates, the Right of the party has attacked government immigration policies for not being tough enough, and has been critical of



the leadership for not implementing all its manifesto commitments on race issues. Multi-culturalism has also been attacked as against the wishes of the British people. In the debate on the BNA in 1981, MPs from the Right of the party wanted tough immigration controls, with Ivor Stanbrook claiming that nationality laws were inevitably exclusivist, but every nation-state had the right to determine its citizenship. Others such as Nick Budgen were critical of the provision of dual nationality arguing that allegiance as a facet of citizenship was being undermined. The most flagrantly racist comments about race in debates on nationality, immigration and race relations have though come from John Stokes. In the nationality debates he referred to Disraeli's claim that "race is everything" and attacked the Bill for not mentioning racial origin. He also attacked multi-culturalism as destructive of English values and society.

"Where immigration has occurred, the immigrant penetration is against the wishes of the indigenous population. The ordinary Englishman still clings obstinately to his Englishness and to the old known ways. He knows only too well that if immigration continues at the present rate..the British people will in time be supplanted by aliens and British people will gradually disappear from these islands." (Hansard, vol 997, col 988).

In immigration debates, the Tory Right has organized abstentions and rebellions against government measures it regards as contrary to party commitments to halt immigration. In a 1982 debate, Stanbrook claimed that immigration laws were necessarily discriminatory, but that this was not racial discrimination. Rather, "the application of any particular law may fall unevenly upon people of different origins" (Hansard, vol 31, col 708). In a 1987 immigration debate, Tim Janman argued for a well funded state repatriation policy "to reduce the degree of swamping". Finally, in the 1990

debates on Hong Kong and British nationality, Norman Tebbit organized a rebellion against measures which would permit the entry into the UK of up to a quarter of a million residents of Hong Kong. Tebbit had been increasingly critical of multi-culturalism, arguing that many immigrants refused to adapt to the British way of life or respect British law. He argued that many immigrants failed his "cricket test" by cheering for their former homeland rather than their adopted country when at Test matches. On the Hong Kong issue, Tebbit outlined what was rapidly becoming a nationalist stance on Europe and race politics, noting public support for Conservative pledges to reduce immigration.

"These pledges were made because these islands of ours are already overcrowded and they were made in the belief that great waves of immigration by people who do not share our culture, language or rules of social conduct, and who in many cases owe no allegiance to our country, were and are destabilizing factors in our society. If we are not to see social upheaval arising from religious, cultural and ethnic differences, we have more than enough to do to integrate existing communities into British society." (Hansard, vol 170, cols 1598-9).

"One nation" Conservatives like Heseltine, Walker and Pym have rejected the Right's opposition to multi-culturalism, calling instead for tolerance, diversity and equal opportunity. Heseltine claims to be the first Conservative to publicly criticize Powell's 1968 "rivers of blood" speech, and at the 1981 Conference debate on race and the inner cities, reminded the party of its "one nation" credentials (Heseltine, 1987). A 1982 Tory Reform Group pamphlet, with an introduction by Peter Walker, also uses the "one nation" theme and makes a number of specific policy recommendations on multi-cultural education, community policing and improved employment prospects. The "Young, British and Black" pamphlet argued that the deprivation and discrimination experienced by ethnic minorities was unacceptable to Conservatives.



"For a Conservative this is an intolerable state of affairs since a prime tenent of Conservatism is the belief in One Nation,which is a rejection of all unnecessary divisions in society such as those between rich and poor,north and south,and black and white.A Conservative believes in equality of opportunity for all and thus must support all positive action to enable specially disadvantaged groups in society to have the chance to compete relatively equally with their neighbour." (Tory Reform Group,1982,p.2).

Like-minded Conservative MPs have also called for improved community relations.John Wilkinson,then chairman of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society,welcomed the 1981 BNA as a boost to community relations,enhancing a sense of belonging and community.In a 1987 immigration debate,Robert Hughes expressed his disgust at manifesto pledges on immigration,arguing that all people in the country should be regarded as British.The debate on the Scarman report brought favourable comments from Edward Gardner and Harry Greenway who saw the Scarman proposals as encouraging community relations.

Participation by members of the ethnic minorities in the Conservative Party is still though at a low level.Since the late 1970s Conservative Central Office has recognized the electoral importance of ethnic minority voters,particularly in marginal inner city seats (Layton-Henry,1978). By 1992,there were 51 constituencies (16 of which were marginal) in which ethnic minorities made up at least 15% of the population,17 held by the Conservatives (Amin & Richardson,1992).In 1976 the Anglo-Asian and Anglo-West Indian Conservative Societies were founded,made up of businessmen and professionals.The National Union also insisted on party involvement in the Joint Committee Against Racialism,despite Thatcher's objections about working in the same group as the far Left.The 1983 party election poster "Labour Says He's Black,We Say He's British" illustrated the Central Office strategy.Its desire to gain electoral support among the ethnic minorites

was though undermined by party policy on immigration and its lack of positive initiatives on overcoming racial disadvantage. In a 1991 Runnymede Trust/Independent on Sunday survey, only 9% of Afro-Caribbeans and 14% of South Asians said they intended to vote Conservative (Amin & Richardson, 1992, pp.22-30). Despite Central Office attempts to woo South Asians (and Indians in particular) with their commitment to family values, the work ethic and private enterprise, 60% of South Asians said they were Labour supporters.

In 1987 the party abolished the Anglo-Asian and Anglo-West Indian societies, fearing Labour-style sectionalism. The former had seen tensions rise as militant Sikhs demanded an independent Khalistan, while the latter had never been very significant. In their place a "One Nation Forum" was set up headed first by Peter Morrison and then John Cope. The tensions raised by the selection of ethnic West Indian John Taylor, a barrister from Solihull, as the party's parliamentary candidate for Cheltenham in December 1990 showed that grassroots racism still exists in the party despite the leadership's attempts to eliminate or disguise it. Taylor's selection was challenged by local Conservatives in Cheltenham who objected to his imposition by Central Office, but much of the criticism was barely disguised racism. At the 1992 general election the party fielded eight ethnic minority candidates, but only three in winnable seats. Ultimately only one of these candidates, the Sri Lankan-born Nirj Deva in Brentford and Isleworth, was successful. Cheltenham was lost to the Liberal Democrats whose campaign stressed their candidate's "local" credentials, but Major's public support for Taylor and his contempt for racial discrimination are encouraging signs of the new leadership's desire that ethnic minorities gain a higher profile in the party.<sup>6</sup>



### Summary and Conclusions.

Thatcherism produced significant developments in Conservative discourse on race and immigration issues, yet lacked the strategic or ideological coherence attributed to it by some analysts. The language of cultural conservatism has found its way into Thatcherite rhetoric, but there has not been the level of theorizing on race, culture and nation associated with Powellism or that wing of the New Right. The influence of Powell on the politics of race is evident in Thatcherism. The populist focus on immigrant communities as posing problems for British society moved to the centre of Conservative discourse on race relations under Thatcher's leadership, but his desire for an integrated politics of nationhood to restore British national identity was not coherently promoted or realized by Thatcherism. Also, Powell's questioning of the liberal consensus affected the entire spectrum of race politics in Britain, not just the attitude of the Conservative Party. Dual-party agreement on the desirability of strict immigration controls, a Nationality Bill and improved race relations emerged in the 1970s. Where Thatcherism departed from Heath's approach to race issues was in its populism, addressing and using for electoral advantage popular fears about immigration and multi-culturalism. Party discourse still paid lip-service to the "dual approach" of immigration controls and improved race relations, but overwhelmingly stressed the Conservative's hardline credentials on immigration and did little more than manage the plural society.

The "New Right, New Racism" thesis is a useful one in tracing the growth of theorising about race, culture and nation in conservative and New Right thought, but its analysis of Thatcherism is less convincing (Gordon & King, 1986; Seidel,

1986). The prime fault of these accounts lie in their exaggeration of the coherence of Thatcherite ideology and strategy. Clearly, Thatcherism did push immigration issues to the top of the political agenda and benefit from this electorally, but this did not constitute a fundamental shift towards a redefinition of national identity along ethnically exclusivist lines. The cultural conservatives of "The Salisbury Group" and the Powellite rump on the Tory backbenches have had only a minimal impact on government policy. Many of the 1979 manifesto commitments on immigration had to be dropped, and the Thatcher governments acted pragmatically in a number of areas eg Vietnamese boat people, British citizenship for people of Gibraltar and the Falklands, and arrangements for Hong Kong after 1997. The Thatcher record on immigration is a hardline and often punitive one, open to criticism for its excesses in sacrificing human rights for the sake of a small reduction in numbers. However, Thatcherism has not put into practice a Powellite nationalist strategy. Tighter immigration regulations have not been accompanied by repatriation measures and the national community is not exclusivist: ethnic minority members are not necessarily excluded from society.

Doctrinally, there are significant tensions between the individualist and strong state elements of Thatcherism. The rhetoric of the latter is populist in tone, portraying immigrant communities as alien and unwelcome, while sympathizing with the fears and prejudices of the white majority. Its focus is on the nation as a culturally united community. The focus of the former though is on the individual and market, rejecting group-based accounts of political life. It claims to be "colour-blind", seeing ethnic differences as politically irrelevant in a free market society. The fact that these two competing outlooks are fused in Thatcherism militates against claims that it is a coherent



nationalist doctrine. The doctrinal evidence would appear to show that Thatcherism is populist rather than nationalist. But the hardline immigration controls urged by its strong state wing, taken with the rejection of state action to reduce racial discrimination and disadvantage by its individualist, free market wing mean that Thatcherism has been unwilling and unable to address the problems of a plural society. The doctrinal tensions in this Thatcherite mixture of cultural and political accounts of the nation are an extension of the doctrinal problems the mainstream conservative nation has experienced in adapting to Britain as a plural society. The values of tradition, organicism, authority and allegiance associated with "one nation" conservatism also rest uneasily with a diversity of strong communal identities. The pronouncements of "one nation" conservatives reveal their dislike for the divisions within the community which Thatcherite policies exacerbated.

The national community envisaged by Thatcherism is one in which immigration is restricted and groups slow to adapt to British society are distrusted and regarded as undesirable. It is not though a strictly ethnically exclusive nation. Thatcherism's attitude towards ethnic minority groups is not uniform: those groups who integrate themselves into British society are praised and courted by the Conservative Party. Thatcher herself has emphasized the proximity between Thatcherite and Jewish values, while the party as a whole has sought to appeal to Asian values of individualism, family and enterprise. The values and lifestyles of other minority groups are frowned upon. West Indians have been portrayed as unsuitable for integration into British society because of their perceived tendency towards criminality and lack of respect for authority. This pattern fits with Krieger's account of Thatcherism as a "de-integrative strategy", dividing society into favoured groups (eg entrepreneurs)

who prosper, and "out-groups" or the "enemy within" (eg black youths, trade unionists) who are treated as outsiders unless they fall in line with Thatcherite values (Krieger,1986).

Goulbourne argues that Thatcherism has developed an ethnic account of the British nation, but the doctrinal and empirical evidence I have presented questions this (Goulbourne,1991). Because of the United Kingdom's ethnic make-up, "British" identity cannot be adequately defined in strictly ethnic terms. Thatcherism does not attempt to define nationhood along purely ethnic lines either. Instead it tends towards a mixed ethnic-ideological account of the nation in which immigrant communities are accepted into the national community provided that they accept the primacy of British values and adapt themselves accordingly to the "British way of life". The costs of integration are raised: diversity of cultures is acceptable but the British way of life must be the dominant one. Where tensions occur, Thatcherism is more uncompromising than the liberal view: ethnic minorities have to undergo a cultural exchange, abandoning or adapting the elements of their lifestyle which clash with the values of British society. Thatcherism's terms for integration are tough. Immigration is severely restricted and integration becomes cultural transfer when tensions arise. Its ideological attachment to British culture and values (which for Thatcherism includes the market ethos) inevitably favours the majority group and discriminates against ethnic groups with different lifestyles, hence its mixed ethnic-ideological account of membership of the nation. Members of ethnic minorities may be British citizens under the BNA, but membership of the legal-political community is different from membership of the national-cultural community. Here Thatcherite rhetoric implies that only those individuals or groups willing or able to adapt to the British way of life are accepted as full



members of the community. According to its rhetoric and strong state doctrine, the Thatcherite vision of the nation is de-integrative in that groups whose cultural values and traditions cannot be easily incorporated into the British way of life are marginalized. This situation is aggravated by Thatcherism's failure to take positive measures to aid disadvantaged minorities.

The problems posed for Conservatives by a plural society containing ethnic communities with their own strongly held identities was most clearly illustrated during the Rushdie Affair. The distinction between integration and assimilation becomes blurred in cases like these where the benefits of ethnic minorities adopting the values and culture of the majority cannot easily be reconciled with the desirability of ethnic minorities retaining their traditional cultures. John Patten made clear that in cases of conflict, a recognition of the authority of the state is paramount, and ethnic minorities must be willing to immerse themselves in the traditions of their adopted country. Membership of the national community here becomes ideological, based on adapting to the culture and values of the dominant ethnic group. The ethnic minority community must effectively subdue its own values, accept the legitimacy of the demands of the majority, show allegiance to the state, and recognize the primacy of the culture of the national community. In education, the Swann Report urged the government to encourage the development of multiculturalism, but the Education Reform Act seeks to insure the primacy of the British way of life through a national curriculum, the teaching of British history and shared worship.

Thatcherism's record on race relations was poor. The strategy of the Thatcher governments was one of managing the plural society rather than

employing positive measures to counteract racial disadvantage. The individualist ethos of Thatcherism may not have been racially discriminatory, but neither was it colour blind. By ignoring the long-term disadvantages suffered by ethnic minority groups in the inner cities, market-oriented policies meant that real problems would not be adequately addressed. By encouraging individual enterprise, the Thatcher governments encouraged the emergence of a black bourgeoisie of entrepreneurs and professionals, but continued the alienation of others by refusing to see their problems in terms of group disadvantage.

Bulpitt argues that it has been in the interests of successive British governments to keep race issues off the political agenda of "high politics" and instead delegate responsibility for them to lower levels eg local authorities and the Commission for Racial Equality (Bulpitt, 1986, b). To some extent this has been the Thatcherite attitude towards race relations: management of the status quo rather than state-led initiative. However, the thesis is weakened by Thatcherism's populist exploitation of the immigration issue, moving race politics to centre stage for electoral advantage. The popular Tory press also helped create an atmosphere in which race issues moved to the top of the political agenda and racial discrimination was not challenged head on. Thatcherism's hostility to the "anti-racist" initiatives of some local authorities also saw the centre playing a more active role in race politics when it felt delegating authority was counterproductive eg in education. Other issues like the Rushdie affair moved to centre stage independently of the government and showed that the preferred strategy was still one of management rather than initiative.



Overall then the Thatcher period produced a move away from the liberal consensus towards a populist,hardline stance on immigration.However,doctrinal tensions and practical problems meant that a Powellite nationalist strategy was always impractical.Thatcherism neither followed the Powellite course of reconstructing nationhood at the expense of the ethnic minorities,nor followed a liberal strategy of encouraging multi-culturalism.Instead it blurred the dividing line between integration and assimilation by formulating an ethnic-ideological account of what being British should involve.On race relations,both Thatcherite and traditional conservative accounts of the national community have failed to address the problems of integration versus assimilation or diversity versus commonality posed by the plural society. Compared to Thatcher's failure to comprehend disadvantage, Major's gut contempt for racial discrimination offers only a limited cause for optimism.The Asylum Bill and opposition to a common EC immigration policy suggest that the dual approach of hardline immigration controls and management of the status quo in race relations will not be fundamentally overhauled.

#### Footnotes:

- 1.Hammar notes the 20th century trend towards linking membership of the state with membership of the nation.To be a member of the state requires both citizenship (membership of the political community) and shared national traits. (for membership of the national community). See Tomas Hammar: *Democracy and the Nation-State*, Research in Ethnic Relations Series, Avebury, Aldershot,1990.See also Geoff Dench: *Minorities in the Open Society: Prisoners of Ambivalence*. Routledge & Kegan Paul,London,1986.On citizenship and denizenship see Zig Layton-Henry (ed): *The Political Rights of Migrant Workers in Western Europe*, SAGE Publications, London,1990.
2. "New Society", 3rd October 1986.
- 3.On race and local politics see Wendy Ball & John Solomos: *Race and Local Politics*. Macmillan,London,1990. On race and education see Barry Troyna (ed): *Racial Equality and Education*. Tavistock Publications,London,1987 and Sally Tomlinson: "Political Dilemmas in Multi-Racial Education" in Zig Layton-Henry

- & Paul Rich (eds): *Race, Government and Politics in Britain*. Macmillan, London, 1986. For a critique of anti-racist policies see Frank Palmer: *Anti-Racism: An Assault on Education and Value*. Sherwood Press, London, 1986.
4. *The Guardian*, 15th April 1989. See also Kenneth Baker: "Argument Before Arson", in *The Times*, 30th January 1989. Tory MP John Townsend called for the deportation of Muslims who broke the law, saying that "England must be reconquered for the English..Now is the time to start the fight back". See *The Guardian*. 29th August 1989.
  5. *The Guardian*, 30th January 1984. On the Monday Club see Patrick Seyd: "Factionalism Within the Conservative Party: The Monday Club" in *Government and Opposition*, vol.17, no.4, 1972. pp.464-487.
  6. Taylor complained of racism within the Cheltenham Conservative Party after his election defeat. Earlier Bill Galbraith, a local party member, had been charged for inciting racial hatred when he referred to Taylor as a "bloody nigger", but died in October 1991 before the case reached court. In the 1992 general election, Sir Nicholas Fairbairn was criticized by Tories for claiming that a Labour government would bring "a flood of migrants and would-be asylum seekers".



### CONCLUSIONS.

Although the concept of the nation remains an important theme in conservative thought, it is my contention that in recent years the conservative nation has been weakened. Burkean and "one nation" accounts of nationhood have gradually been eroded, undermined by the emergence of the rival neo-liberal and cultural conservative wings of the New Right. Equally, the Conservative Party's grip on the language of nationhood, though revived by Thatcherism, has come under pressure: it can no longer be portrayed as a natural or inevitable relationship. Its use of nationalistic rhetoric has persuaded some analysts that Thatcherism has a coherent nationalist doctrine which feeds into government policies on EC or race issues. But this account is unsatisfactory, neglecting the tensions within Thatcherite doctrine and the limitations placed upon a national strategy by the demands of statecraft. The Thatcher era saw neither the "one nation" nor the Powellite "nationalist" strategies being pursued. Instead Thatcherism moved towards a fusion of neo-liberal individualism (the political nation) and authoritarian conservatism (the cultural nation). This led to inconsistency and deviations from the traditional conservative nation eg in the trend towards an ethnic-ideological account of nationhood. Nor did Thatcherism construct a coherent national strategy in its approach to policy areas like race relations, the EC or the Union.'

The conservative nation's highpoint was the Disraelian era when the Conservative Party successfully appropriated the language of nationhood to construct a political strategy in which themes of national identity and

unity fed into key policy areas. But even the Disraelian national strategy had flaws: the universalizing tendencies of myths of race and empire, the lack of concrete social reforms. Baldwin's nostalgic and parochial national rhetoric marked a relative depoliticization of the concept of the nation, for by this time nationalism had come to be identified with the oppositional politics of the Far Right. Powellism offers a more recent example of the oppositional rather than governmental character of nationalist politics in Britain. The Powellite nationalist strategy proved incompatible with the demands of statecraft and pragmatic issue management faced by government. This also illustrates the gap between conservative thought and the policies of the Conservative Party: there is no explicit or necessary relationship between the two. Pragmatism and scepticism prevent the Conservative Party from becoming an ideological party, but the division between liberal-conservatives and authoritarian conservatives is evident in both the party and wider conservative thought. Although many Conservative Party MPs and members are happy to avoid serious contemplation about the nature of conservatism, their views are shaped by a cluster of identifiably conservative values (eg scepticism, respect for tradition and private property) and by opposition to rationalist politics.

Demands of statecraft and issue management work against the creation of a coherent nationalist strategy. Though it did not systematically attempt to construct a new politics of nationhood, Thatcherism did try to reverse some of the trends of the 1960s and 1970s which had contributed to the weakening of the nation-state and national identity eg devolution, immigration, problems with the EC budget. Thatcherism sought to restore the nation-state as the central unit of political life, undermining competing



power centres (eg local government and trade unions), pressing for British interests and protecting state sovereignty in Europe, and returning to Unionist politics in Scotland. Northern Ireland was the key area of deviation given the Anglo-Irish Agreement, though there was little scope for local input into policy-making in the Province. The conservative nation has always been faced with the difficult task of promoting an Anglo-British state-based identity, while component nations of the UK to enjoy a reasonable level of cultural and political autonomy. Thatcherism though exacerbated existing territorial tensions by clinging to a strident form of constitutional Unionism in Scotland, further alienating an area in which Conservative support was in real decline. The devolution question is likely to remain on the political agenda in the 1990s given the rising interest in the concept of a "Europe of the regions" as an alternative to a centralized European Union. The Conservatives fought the 1992 general election on a strongly Unionist platform, but moves towards a new decentralized relationship may be necessary in the medium-term.

The decline in the efficacy of the nation-state has continued despite Thatcherism's attempts to restore its pre-eminence. Thatcher tended to view developments in the EC in terms of British sovereignty, but this concept is an imprecise and unhelpful one, while the maximalist definition accorded to it by Thatcher failed to take into account the reduced scope for independent British action. This should not be taken to mean that European Union is inevitable or wholly desirable. John Major's willingness to work within the EC and adapt the Community language (eg notions of subsidiarity and democratic deficit) to meet British visions and interests is a more constructive means of ensuring that British interests are considered than

was Thatcher's obstructionism. Major's approach is a more positive type of scepticism than that of the "Euro-sceptics", drawing on traditional conservative scepticism towards grand projects and its preference for gradual, controlled change. Thus Major signed the Maastricht Treaty but secured an opt-out on the final stage of EMU based as much on scepticism about its workability and desirability as on any ideologically-inspired opposition. By contrast the positions taken by many "Euro-sceptics" are based on outright hostility towards the EC and a clinging to mythical notions of economic and political sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> The Danish referendum result has cast a sizeable shadow over the 1992 British Presidency which should have seen the government acting positively to secure Britain's place at "the heart of Europe" by pressing for the completion of the single market, an inter-governmental path for future development, and the long-term enlargement of the Community. The Major government needs to develop its more constructive approach to Europe and its vision of an inter-governmental EC by outlining a commitment to a subsidiarity based on decision-making at both nation-state and regional level.

Thatcherism departed from the "one nation" model of the Conservative's national strategy which valued both territorial and social integration. Relations between state and local government were strained, with the economic and electoral divide between North and South widening in the 1980s. The de-integrative trend in Thatcherism undermined the "one nation" emphasis on national unity and social cohesion. Whereas the Conservative Party has historically used nationalist and "one nation" appeals to neutralize or disguise class conflict, Thatcherism allowed social relations to degenerate to a point where up to one-third of the population are



alienated from the values of the rest of society. Britain's development as a plural society following the influx of New Commonwealth immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s has never been adequately addressed by the Conservative Party. Its reaction has been a mixture of hard-line immigration policies and a pragmatic management of race relations designed to keep race issues off the political agenda. In the Thatcher years the emphasis was very much on the tightening of immigration and citizenship laws, with little effort or initiative to improve race relations. The conservative nation, with its focus on the traditions and institutions of the Anglo-British Establishment, may not be the best vehicle for addressing the problems of a plural society with a diversity of ethnic lifestyles, but Thatcherism again aggravated existing problems by moving towards an ethnic-ideological account of nationhood in which ethnic minorities who diverge from the "British way of life" are alienated and chastised.

The conservative nation has been doctrinally threatened by a revival of socialist thinking on nationhood, and, of more concern, by the rise of neo-liberal individualist and cultural conservative concepts of the nation. Recent socialist scholarship has helped undermine the myth that the language of nationhood is inevitably linked to conservative discourse, while New Right thought has undone the delicate balance between political (civic) and cultural (ethnic) accounts of the nation found in the Burkean model of the conservative nation. Though not formulating its own coherent concept of the nation, Thatcherism has tipped the balance away from the traditional fusion of civic and ethnic elements by embracing the more extreme accounts found in New Right thought. This creates an unstable concept of the nation in which the individualist and cultural conservative elements continually

clash (eg on race and EC issues), adding to the problems of statecraft mentioned above. Doctrinal tensions and policy inconsistencies act as reminders that Thatcherism was not a coherent ideology, though its departure from previous Conservative national strategies is significant.<sup>3</sup>

The task of post-Thatcherite conservatives is to redefine and build upon a conservative concept of the nation in which the positive themes of community and identity are accentuated. The doctrinal strength of the conservative nation rests upon its espousal of tradition and recognition of man's place as a member of various communities from family and locality to the historical national community. Conservatives from Hume and Burke to Hayek and Oakeshott have valued traditional practices as a repository of wisdom, guiding present procedures (Parry, 1982). Shared traditions are an important source of identity and community in the historical national community. Conservative and nationalist thought shares this belief in the importance of tradition, community and identity. Anthony Smith argues that the continued strength of national identities can be explained by man's need to identify with a collectivity which extends over time, linking man with his co-nationals and with the past and future of his community (Smith, 1991, pp. 161-163). The national community is though an "imagined community": no one can personally know all of his fellow citizens, but becomes aware of their shared citizenship and experiences through socialization and the use of symbols of national identity (Anderson, 1983).

It is my belief that the concept of community should be a central plank of a redefined conservative nation. In a plural society, the focus should not



be purely on the nation, but on the plethora of communal relations and identities (Burke's "little platoons") desirable in a society which accepts diversity yet has a common idea of itself. Community and identity are inextricably linked: it is through his membership of various communities that man becomes aware of himself as a social being, sensing his role and belonging within the social whole. Conservatives will readily accept David Clark's contention that the worth of community lies in the sentiments of solidarity (social cohesion, national unity, common purpose) and significance (each person being part of an ordered society, with rights and responsibilities) (Clark, 1973). As a community, the nation is an important source of identity, loyalty and shared purpose, but it should not be defined in exclusively ethnic or political terms. The nation is the arena in which political rights and obligations are framed, as well as the historical community which binds people through shared traditions and loyalties.

Conservatives have been slow to respond to the recent revival of communitarian thinking, even though many non-conservative communitarian thinkers have espoused identifiably conservative themes.<sup>4</sup> Communitarian thought rejects the Rawlsian idea of the "unencumbered self" which believes that man can be abstracted from his social relations to an "Archimedean point" outside of society from where the character of the just society can be decided. Thus Walzer argues that membership of a community is the primary political good, for the community is the arena in which cultural values and identities are moulded (Walzer, 1983). Though Walzer opposes the regulation of communal membership along ethnic or cultural lines, he accepts the continued relevance of national identity and the need for a society to control the distribution of its membership rights. Kymlicka is also critical

of liberalism for ignoring man's embeddedness in communal practices and shared culture.

"People are bound in an important way to their own cultural community.. Cultural membership affects our very sense of personal identity and capacity..Cultural membership seems crucial to personal agency and development:when the individual is stripped of her cultural heritage,her development becomes stunted" (Kymlicka,1989,pp.175-176).

The communitarian revival began on the Left,but themes of virtue,social identity,culture and tradition offer important pointers to a new direction for the conservative nation (Cochran,1989,p.435; Nisbet,1962).The Thatcher era saw a repudiation of "one nation" or "middle way" conservatism,but as a post-Thatcherite agenda emerges,ideas of community are again coming to the fore,often linked with the new-found conservative interest in the concept of citizenship.Thus conservative thinkers are returning to a Burkean mix of political and cultural accounts of community and nation,avoiding both the de-integrative individualism of the neo-liberal New Right and the demands for a reassertion of cultural unity expressed by its authoritarian wing.In a recent work David Willetts,the former head of the Policy Studies Unit and now a Conservative MP,states that the task of the modern conservative is the linking of ideas of community and market in a new politics,without succumbing to narrow nationalism (Willetts,1992,p.74).He argues that conservatives should not see the nation as the only viable community,but as one among many.<sup>5</sup> This is a "micro-conservatism" which:

"emphasizes the particular network of communities which gives each individual life its meaning - from the family and the firm to the neighbourhood,and to friends or relatives or colleagues who may come from another country.The nation-state has a role,but a much more modest one in sustaining a political order in which this multiplicity of communities can thrive.The nation-state can command our loyalty as the protector of those communities,but we certainly cannot look at it as



one organic whole embodying detailed moral purposes which we all share." (Willetts,1992,p.105).

Willetts associates the conservative commitment to community with co-operative relations between individuals and with decentralization. He argues for a reconciliation of individualism (focusing on freedom, prosperity, ownership and the free market) and community (the family, community work and civic culture). This emphasis on community and market is evident in other examples of post-Thatcherite conservative thinking. John Vincent places Thatcherism "at a tangent" to mainstream conservatism which rejects materialism and selfish individualism and looks to community, identity and stability (Vincent,1991). Kenneth Baker argued that 1990s conservatism had to revive the family and local communities in a society of "responsible individuals" (Baker,1990). The One Nation group of Conservative MPs continues to press for an agenda in which national unity and a socially-responsible market are guiding values (One Nation Group, 1992). The Thatcherite torch though is still being carried by the 'No Turning Back' Group and by ministers such as Michael Portillo.<sup>6</sup>

Of greater significance is Conservative interest in citizenship, another crucial element of community which seeks to link man to the state and to his compatriots. John Major's "Citizens Charter" must, though, be classed as a disappointment for those who welcomed Douglas Hurd's advocacy of "active citizenship" or Chris Patten's espousal of the social market. The Citizen's Charter is as yet little more than an elaborate, though not particularly successful, mechanism for the redress of grievances against bureaucracy. Its key themes are quality, choice, standards and value, but its focus is almost exclusively on the "improvement" of public services, through Thatcherite

methods of privatization and performance-related pay. Hurd's concept of "active citizenship" focuses on civic obligation, the diffusion of power, and voluntary service as means of nurturing effective forms of community (Hurd, 1988 & 1991). The rhetoric of "active citizenship" and "entitlement" is though misleading: the conservative concept of citizenship is not concerned with increased participation, community power or democratization, but with voluntary work, social order and the depoliticization of local communities. Chris Patten's advocacy of the social market is a departure from the individualism of the Thatcher years, stressing rather than frowning upon themes of social solidarity, economic partnership and a socially-responsible market (C. Patten, 1991).

The Conservative interest in citizenship and community is a welcome move away from the individualist ethos of the Thatcher era, but as yet its rhetorical commitments to local communities and entitlement have not been matched by substantive government action. The traditional conservative view of man as subject rather than citizen has not been abandoned: the Major government is not encouraging the politicization of relations between individual, local community and state. Instead it aims to construct competing centres of loyalty, bridging the gap between individual and state: a laudable vision, but local control of schools, neighbourhood watch schemes and the redress of grievances against public services is unlikely to restore a sense of communal loyalty to Britain's decaying cities. The rhetoric of responsible private industry has not prevented the newly-privatized utilities from raising prices and the wages of their chief executives. Conservative citizenship does not have the commitment to social, economic and democratic rights present in Left-liberal accounts.<sup>7</sup> Without a real



commitment to a more socially-responsible market economy, active citizenship will only half-heartedly address the alienation of significant sectors of society.

The post-Thatcherite conservative nation should seek to complement a commitment to active citizenship with the fostering of a patriotism tailored to meet the demands of a plural society. Atavistic nationalisms and myths of empire or British isolation must be sacrificed - the latter being the only positive message to come from Powellism. Conservative scepticism dictates that the search for community should not become an all-embracing philosophy, but must be part of a gradual realignment of society, reflecting empirical realities. The cultural conservatives' quest for cultural homogeneity and common moral purpose is thus an example of the worst excesses of rationalist projects. A return to the style of depoliticized patriotism advocated by Baldwin or Oakeshott is the necessary counterpart of conservatism's search for community, which itself should be constructed along the Burkean lines of affinity with the "little platoons". The focus on the British political and institutional traditions of constitutionalism and the rule of law found in political accounts of the nation provides a basis for patriotic allegiance.<sup>8</sup> This political account must though be coupled with a recognition of man's membership of a historical, cultural community in which his identity and perceptions are shaped.

One of the most difficult problems for conservatives is adapting the conservative nation to the plural society. Though one nation conservatism urges unity and harmony, its values are still those of an Anglo-British political culture. Historically, British conservatives have found it easier to

disguise and overcome class divisions than they have ethnic ones. What is required is a reassertion of the conservative nation's civic-ethnic mix, taking into account the valuable historical traditions of British society, but accepting ethnic diversity within a framework of patriotic allegiance. Thatcherism demanded the abandonment of lifestyles deemed incompatible with the "British way of life". Post-Thatcherite conservatism should work for a society in which all its members, of whichever ethnic group, share a sense of belonging and a common idea of a Britain where racial discrimination and disadvantage are more effectively tackled. The encouragement of loyalty to the "little platoons" will foster tolerance of ethnic minorities, while the construction of a depoliticized civic-ethnic patriotism based on common institutions and active citizenship can help to ensure that the nation is the arena in which values of community and identity can be realized.

#### Footnotes:

1. A Conservative Party national strategy comes into being when its key figures espouse a coherent concept of the nation and use this when developing policy responses in relevant policy areas (eg foreign policy, social and territorial integration). Thatcherism rejected the "one nation" and Powellite "nationalist" models, embarking instead on a redefinition of the nation drawing on neo-liberal and cultural conservative themes. The Thatcher governments revived Tory use of the language of nationhood but did not develop a fully-fledged national strategy because of doctrinal tensions and problems of issue management.
2. The problems of constructing an intellectual Euro-sceptic response in a political climate shaped by Euro-enthusiasts are discussed in Jim Bulpitt: "Conservative Leaders and the 'Euro-Ratchet': Five Doses of Scepticism" in *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 3, 1992. pp. 258-275. Bulpitt concludes that, given the problems of constructing an anti-integrationist strategy or coalition, Euro-sceptics are left with the unappetizing option of waiting for the predicted contradictions of European Union to reveal themselves.
3. My use of the term "Thatcherism" is a loose one. Thatcherism is not hegemonic in character, nor were the policies pursued by the Thatcher governments consistent over time or across policy areas. But the changes



in style, policy and doctrine associated with the Thatcher governments, and its move away from the traditional conservative nation or national strategies justifies the use of the term. It is still too early to categorically state whether Major's premiership is a continuation or rebuttal of Thatcherism, though I suspect that Thatcher herself is right in saying that "there is no such thing as Majorism".

4. On communitarian thought see also Chapter Nine of Raymond Plant: *Modern Political Thought*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1991 and H.N. Hirsch: "The Threnody of Liberalism: Constitutional Liberty and the Renewal of Community" in *Political Theory*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1988. pp. 423-449.
5. Willetts model of a conservatism embracing ideas of community and market is undermined by conceptual weaknesses. He appeals to the Burkean idea of a society of "little platoons", yet criticizes Burke for a "macro-conservatism" which emphasizes the nation at the expense of other communities (p. 105). He also claims that Thatcherism followed this dual course, despite obvious differences between his account and the Thatcherite vision.
6. See The 'No Turning Back' Group: *Choice and Responsibility: The Enabling State*. Conservative Political Centre, London, 1990 and Michael Portillo: *A Vision for the 1990s*. Conservative Political Centre, London, 1992.
7. On Left-liberal accounts of citizenship and community see Stuart Hall & David Held: "Left and Rights" in *Marxism Today*, vol. 33, no. 6, 1989. pp. 16-22. Raymond Plant: "Citizenship, Empowerment and Welfare" plus David Marquand: "A Language of Community" both in Ben Pimlott et al: *The Alternative: Politics For A Change*. W.H. Allen, London, 1990. Tony Blair: "Drawing on an Inner Strength" in *The Guardian*, 30th June 1992.
8. Influenced by Ernest Renan, Spanish conservative theorist Jose Ortega Y Gasset looks to the nation as a political community in which a people, linked by a shared past and common territory, come together to build a common future. See Ortega Y Gasset: *The Revolt of the Masses*. George Allen Unwin, London, 1961.

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